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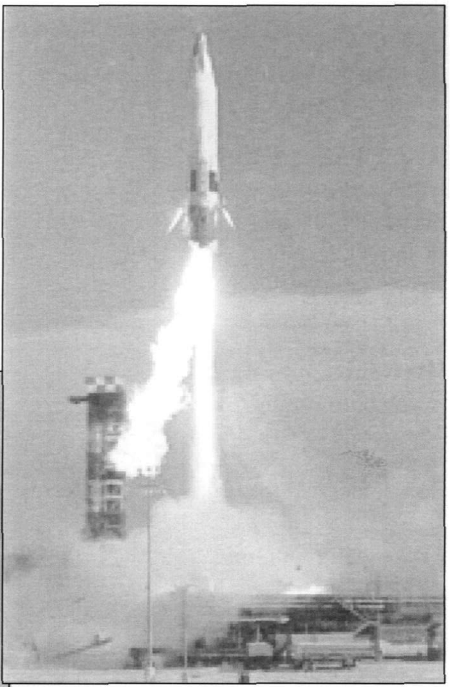
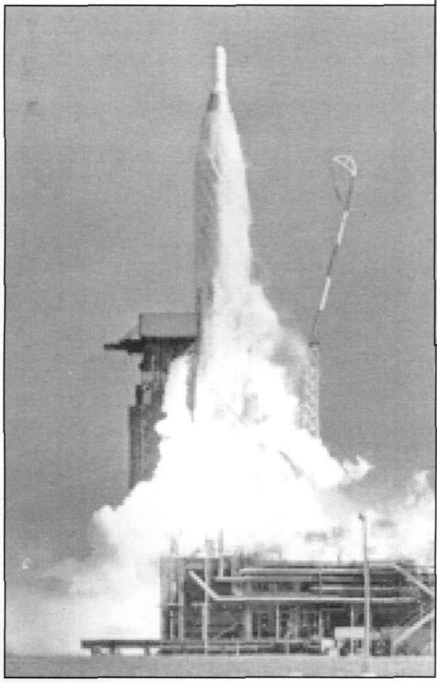
A SHOT ACROSS THE BOW





ATLAS ROCKET SHOT DOWN BY UFO IN 1964?

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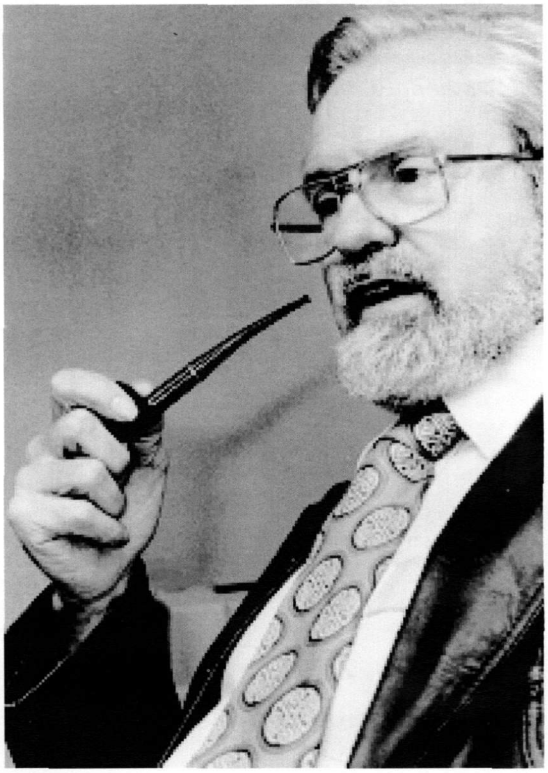

J. Allen Hynek
1910-1986

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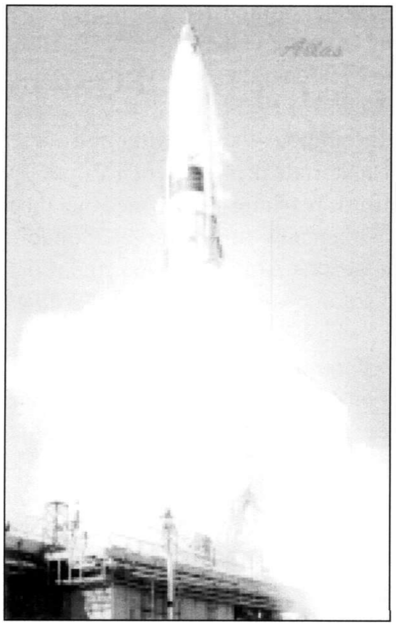
A SHOT ACROSS THE BOW: ANOTHER LOOK AT THE BIG SUR INCIDENT

BY ROBERT HASTINGS

The Big Sur UFO Incident has been studied and debated for more than two decades. Some researchers, including the author, consider it to be an unparalleled example of UFO interest in—and interference with—our nuclear missile systems. However, other ufologists dismiss the case, either because they believe it to be explainable in prosaic terms, or they view it as a complete fabrication, an absurd hoax perpetrated by two U.S. Air Force officers, former Lt. Bob Jacobs and retired Maj. Florenz Mansmann.

My own opinion is that the critics have judged prematurely and in an essentially uninformed manner. As I have discovered, many of them are badly *misinformed* about the case, having unreservedly accepted a dismissive but factually inaccurate summary of it published by a leading skeptical magazine. Other detractors have reviewed Jacobs's own presentation of the case—apparently inattentively—and have subsequently misstated his remarks in a most irresponsible manner.


USAF Atlas D missile blasts off from Patrick AFB in Florida.

In an effort to set the record straight, I present below unpublished or not widely circulated information about the Big Sur UFO incident which is highly relevant to this debate. I will also examine a number of fundamental errors in the above-mentioned debunking of the case.

First, a brief review of the alleged UFO encounter:

Early one morning in September 1964, an Atlas D Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) was launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, carrying aloft an experimental enemy radar–defeating system and dummy nuclear warhead. Shortly after nose-cone separation, as the warhead raced toward a targeted splashdown at Eniwetok Lagoon, in the Pacific Ocean, a disc-shaped UFO approached it. As the saucer chased and then circled the warhead, four bright flashes of light emanated from the unknown craft, whereupon the warhead began to tumble, eventually falling into the ocean hundreds of miles short of its intended target downrange.

Science fiction? Not according to the former USAF officer tasked with filming the Atlas launch through a high-powered telescope. Then Lt. (now Dr.) Bob Jacobs—who was assigned to the 1369th Photographic Squadron at Vandenberg, and held the title of Officer-in-Charge of Photo-instrumentation—states that the entire encounter was captured on motion picture film. According to Jacobs, while the UFO's maneuvers were readily discernable, other minute details—including the object's domed disc-shape—were only discovered during in-depth optical analysis conducted at Vandenberg.

At the time, the telescope/camera system was located at Big Sur, California, over 100 miles northwest of the launch site. The state-of-the-art instrument employed an ultra light-sensitive Image Orthicon—essentially a television-camera tube—whose images were filmed for study with a 35-mm movie camera.

Following the dramatic incident, says Jacobs, a 16-mm version of the amazing film was shown to a small, select group at Vandenberg. Immediately thereafter, the crucial frames were cut out and quickly confiscated by two "government agents"—possibly working for the CIA—who had been among those in attendance.

Importantly, Jacobs's account—relating to both the UFO incident itself and the subsequent cover-up—has been entirely endorsed by another officer, retired Maj. (later Dr.) Florenz J. Mansmann Jr. At the time, Mansmann had been assigned to Vandenberg AFB's Office of the Chief Scientist, 1st Strategic Aerospace Division. It was he who had ordered Lt. Jacobs to attend the restricted screening of the film in his office at the division's headquarters building.

Robert Hastings, a former semiconductor laboratory analyst, has researched nuclear weapons–related UFO sightings since 1973. Over the last 25 years, he has presented his findings at over 500 colleges and universities nationwide.

Dr. Jacobs's thorough and technically detailed summary of the incident, "Deliberate Deception: The Big Sur UFO Filming," was published in the January 1989 issue of the *MUFON UFO Journal* and is currently available online.[1]

Because Jacobs's account is still accessible, rather than extensively restating his remarks here, I have instead opted to present additional, pertinent information about the case. However, before doing so, some context might be useful, given the nuclear weapons aspect of the Big Sur incident.

UFOs AND NUKES

Ongoing UFO activity at U.S. nuclear weapons sites is now a documented historical fact. Declassified Air Force, FBI, and CIA records—principally secured via the Freedom of Information Act—have revealed unquestionably significant sighting incidents, decade after decade.

One FBI memo, dated January 31, 1949, refers to the repeated observation of "flying discs, flying saucers, and balls of fire" at or near Los Alamos, New Mexico—the birthplace of nuclear weapons—as early as December 1948. Numerous UFO reports were also made, throughout the 1950s, by personnel working at the nuclear materials production plants at Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Hanford, Washington; and Savannah River, South Carolina. Other now-released documents discuss UFO sightings at various Army and Air Force nuclear weapons staging and storage areas.

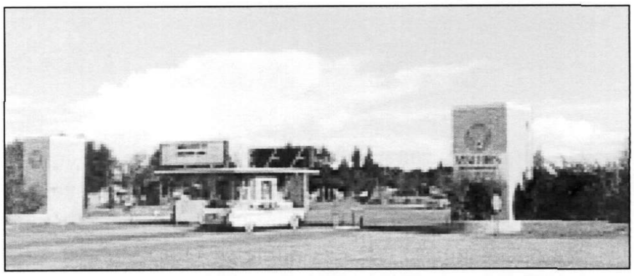
In short, very early in the Nuclear Age, which essentially began in 1945, *someone* piloting technologically superior, disc-shaped aircraft seemed intent on conducting ongoing surveillance of the U.S. government's top secret nuclear weapons sites.

An important, quasiofficial admission of these intriguing developments was provided by former U.S. Air Force Capt. Edward J. Ruppelt, in 1956, with the publication of his book, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects*. As the first chief of Project Blue Book, Ruppelt had been privy to intelligence summaries relating to sightings at various highly-sensitive installations. "UFOs were seen more frequently around areas vital to the defense of the United States," he wrote, "The Los Alamos-Albuquerque area, Oak Ridge, and White Sands Proving Ground rated high."[2]

Each of these locations was directly or indirectly involved in America's nuclear weapons program. The Los Alamos laboratory conducted theoretical research and designed the bombs. In Albuquerque, Sandia Base (later renamed Sandia National Laboratories) engineered those weapons, which were then usually transported to nearby Manzano Base, an underground storage facility. Just west of Manzano, at Kirtland Air Force Base, the nukes were routinely loaded onto strategic bombers and cargo aircraft and flown to test sites in Nevada and the Pacific Ocean, as well as to military bases throughout the United States.

Meanwhile, at Oak Ridge, as reactors feverishly produced weapons-grade uranium and plutonium for an ever-expanding nuclear arsenal, frequent UFO reports were made by various security officers at the installation, as well as by military pilots and radar personnel at nearby bases.

At the third UFO hot spot mentioned by Ruppelt, White Sands Proving Grounds, located in the desert of southern New Mexico, the military was earnestly testing the rudimentary rockets which would, within a decade, evolve into highly-accurate, intercontinental delivery systems for U.S. nuclear warheads.

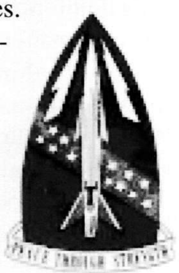


Entrance to Walker AFB, Roswell, New Mexico.

UFO SIGHTINGS AT NUCLEAR MISSILE SITES

Although nuclear-tipped missiles had not yet been deployed when Ruppelt wrote his book, my own research has confirmed that the first generation of U.S. ICBMs were also the target of ongoing UFO surveillance. For example, in 1964–1965, the Air Force's 579th Strategic Missile Squadron, based at Walker AFB in Roswell, New Mexico, experienced a rash of sightings at its Atlas ICBM sites. Startling testimony relating to these incidents has been provided by a number of former or retired missile launch officers, including Lt.Col. Philip E. Moore and Lt. Jerry C. Nelson.

Moore describes an incident in the fall of 1964, during which an extremely bright light first hovered over one Atlas launch site, then instantaneously moved off at unbelievable speed, only to instantaneously stop and hover over an adjacent missile site.



579th Strategic Missile Squadron patch

Nelson describes an equally dramatic series of UFO incidents at yet another Atlas site, during which an unlit, silent object hovered directly over the missile silo at low altitude while shining a bright light directly onto it. The former launch officer reports that the site's guards were extremely concerned and frightened by these mysterious encounters.

Similar testimony is offered by former 579th SMS missile facilities technicians and others. A summary may be found in my online article, *UFO Sightings at ICBM Sites and Nuclear Weapons Storage Areas.*[3] The material is excerpted from my forthcoming book, *The UFO/Nukes Connection*, which presents detailed information regarding such sightings at a number of U.S. Air Force ICBM bases between 1964 and 1996.

Significantly, on some occasions, the reported UFO activity transcended mere surveillance and apparently involved deliberate, or at least incidental, interference with the missiles' functionality. Dramatic testimony to this effect has come from former ICBM launch and targeting officers, as well as missile maintenance personnel.

On that note, I return to the discussion of the Big Sur UFO incident.

Left to right: CWO Guy M. Spooner, Lt. Bob Jacobs, Mr. Paulson from Air Force Eastern Test Range, and Maj. Florenz J. Mansmann.

LETTERS OF JACOBS AND MANSMANN

I first interviewed Jacobs by telephone in 1986. Afterward I was provided copies of personal correspondence between himself and Mansmann that referenced the Big Sur event. Additionally, researcher Lee Graham provided me with copies of letters Mansmann had written to him, as well as to another individual, Peter Bons, on the same subject.

In those letters, Jacobs and Mansmann were obviously still stunned by and marveling over the Big Sur UFO incident some 20 years later. It is important to note that this correspondence was never intended for publication, to support the validity of the case. Rather, it represents the private musings of two former USAF officers—involved and knowledgeable insiders—who had experienced what was obviously a life-changing event for each of them.

In one letter to Graham, dated January 30, 1983, Mansmann lamented the fact that Jacobs had gone public with the case. He wrote, "I do have some deep concerns about information, so vital to the future of mankind, falling into the wrong hands." He then alluded to the Soviets' theft of A-bomb secrets during World War II. Nevertheless, said Mansmann, because "the cat [was] out of the bag," he had decided to confirm Jacobs's account of the incident to various individuals who had written to him.[4]

Mansmann echoed this sentiment in a letter to Peter Bons, dated March 8, 1983: "Dr. Bob opened a pandoras box [sic] and in the last few months I have been bombarded with phone calls and letters. I try to answer the sincere ones."

Mansmann then discussed the image of the UFO captured on film: "Details would be sketchy and from memory. The shape was [a] classic disc, the center seemed to be a raised bubble . . . the entire lower saucer shape . . . was glowing and seemed to be rotating slowly. At the point of beam release—if it was a beam, it, the object, turned like an object required to be in a position to fire from a platform . . . but again this could be my own assumption from being in aerial combat." Mansmann's evaluation of the UFO's origin was explicit: ". . . the assumption was, at that time, extraterrestrial."[5]

At some point, Lee Graham forwarded copies of these letters to Bob Jacobs. The former lieutenant subsequently wrote to Mansmann on January 14, 1985, saying, "[Your letters to Graham and Bons] reveal a great deal more about that fateful piece of film than even I knew. It appears that you did a good deal of analysis on it at the time."

Jacobs continued, "The technology to which you and I were witness, the technology recorded on that few feet of film, indicates orders of magnitude [beyond] our relatively primitive efforts in mechanics, propulsion, and possibly quantum physics as well. Such intelligence might be suspected to regard us as little more than savages."

Jacobs then speculated that the UFO's aggressive action was intended as a reprimand. Referring to the four flashes of light which seemingly disabled the dummy warhead, he wrote, "those beams of light on our film [were] a WARNING. A shot fired across the bow, so to speak, of our nuclear silliness ship."[6]

To document these statements, I have forwarded copies of the correspondence between Jacobs and Mansmann to CUFOS, where it will now be made available to other researchers. Although Florenz Mansmann is deceased, Bob Jacobs and Lee Graham have given me permission to place the letters in the public record.

The importance of these 1980s-era personal letters is obvious. Taken together, they capture the candid, unguarded impressions of the two most important sources for the Big Sur UFO story. Notably, those impressions coincided to a remarkable degree, even though Jacobs and Mansmann had no contact with one another once they left Vandenberg AFB some 20 years earlier. Lee Graham's fortuitous intercession reunited them, and they obviously had much to discuss.

Maj. Florenz J. Mansmann

WITH JACOBS ON *SIGHTINGS*

In 1995, a producer with the television series *Sightings* contacted me regarding my UFO research, and extended an invitation to appear in one of the show's segments. Frankly, I was cautious, given the program's often not-well-grounded presentation of paranormal phenomena. I was uneasy about

Sightings' general superficiality and tendency toward the melodramatic. But, of course, the series was produced in Hollywood, where audience-share ratings are far more important than the presentation of serious research. *Sightings* was designed to be popular entertainment, nothing more, capitalizing on the public's fascination with the paranormal.

After weighing the pros and cons, I eventually consented to appear on the show. The segment producer, Curt Collier, then asked me to contact a few of my ex-military sources, in the hope that one of them would participate in a joint appearance. My first thought was of Bob Jacobs. Although I had not spoken with him for years, I located Dr. Jacobs and asked if he would be interested in telling his story to a nationwide television audience. He readily agreed. Basically, Bob and I had each concluded that *any* public airing of the facts involved in the Big Sur UFO incident would be a positive development. While I would have much preferred a call from a producer at *60 Minutes*, offering to put Bob Jacobs's story on the air, I suspect that such a proposal would have never materialized.

Bob Jacobs

Because our schedules did not coincide, the *Sightings* staff interviewed Jacobs and me separately. Shortly after I arrived at Paramount Studios, producer Collier handed me a letter he had just received from Dr. Mansmann. I read it and was delighted. The retired USAF major had unequivocally endorsed—yet again—all of Jacobs's public statements about the Big Sur UFO case.

Dated November 15, 1995, the letter began, "Dear Mr. Collier, Responding to your Fed Ex letter of November 14, 1995 regarding the validity of the January 1989 MUFON [UFO] Journal story by Dr. Robert Jacobs, it is all true as presented. And yes, I have also responded to other researchers in the past, but only after Dr. Jacobs released the details of these sightings [sic] negating my secrecy bond."

Mansmann continued, "The Image Orthicon camera system we used in capturing the Unidentified Flying Object on film had the capacity to photograph the 'nuts and bolts' of the missile launch and its supersonic flight. . . . In retrospect, I now regret not being able to evaluate the film for more than 3 showings. The only people in attendance of the viewing were: The Director of the Office of the Chief Scientist and his assistant, two Government Agents, Lieutenant Jacobs and myself. The two Government Agents confiscated the film and placed it in a briefcase and departed after I had checked their authorization to leave with the film. I was instructed later by the Office of the Chief Scientist, the Judge Advocate General's office and my Commanding Officer to consider the incident top secret." Mansmann concluded his letter to Collier, "I am writing to confirm Dr. Jacobs' account."[7]

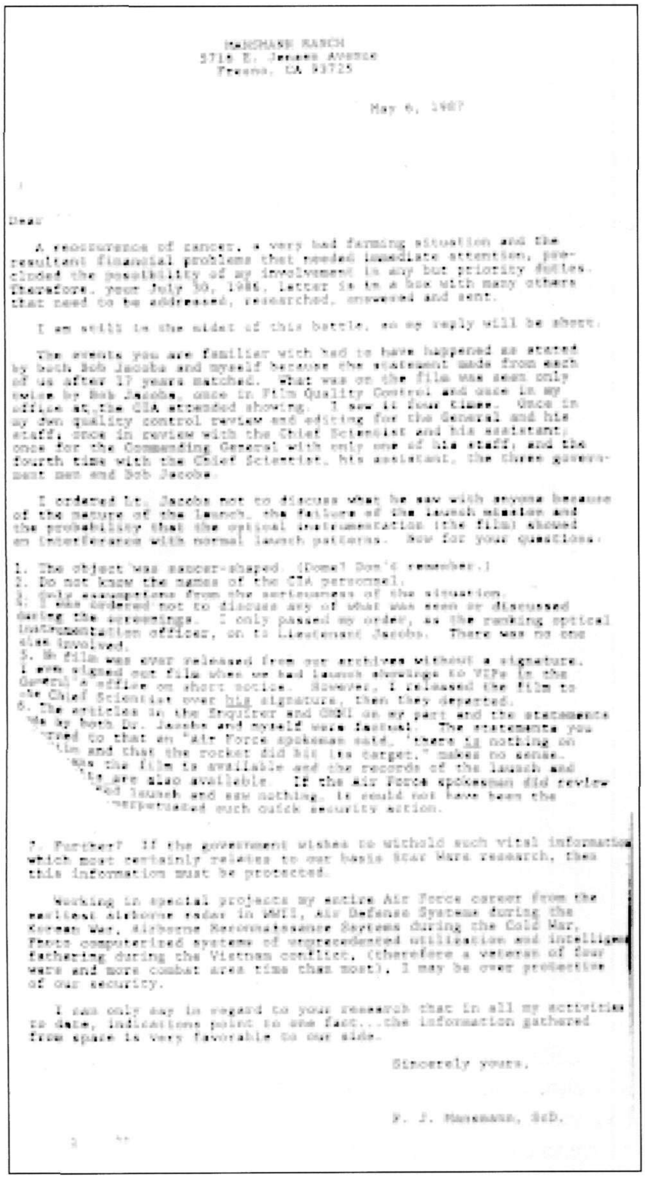
In other words, more than 30 years after the top secret incident and more than six years after Jacobs's article appeared in the *MUFON UFO Journal*, Dr. Mansmann was once again unreservedly verifying Bob Jacobs's report of a UFO shooting down a dummy nuclear warhead over the Pacific Ocean, in September 1964.

Florenz J. Mansmann Jr. died on July 4, 2000, but he remained adamant to the end that the extraordinary encounter—involving an extraterrestrial spacecraft—had occurred and was classified Top Secret.

WAS THE CIA INVOLVED?

Mansmann's description of the confiscation of the critical film footage—which he says was unreeled after the group viewing in his office and snipped out with scissors—has been challenged by some detractors of the Big Sur UFO case. Admittedly, there do seem to be inconsistencies relating to the "agents" in the former major's account, as summarized in his personal letters over the years.

For example, in a May 6, 1987, letter to researcher T. Scott Crain Jr. (left), Mansmann had unambiguously written that the agents were employed by the CIA. Specifi-



MANSMANN RANCH
5718 E. Jensen Avenue
Fresno, CA 93725

May 6, 1987

Dear

A reoccurrence of cancer, a very bad farming situation and the resultant financial problems that needed immediate attention, precluded the possibility of my involvement in any but priority duties. Therefore, your July 30, 1986, letter is in a box with many others that need to be addressed, researched, answered and sent.

I am still in the midst of this battle, so my reply will be short.

The events you are familiar with had to have happened as stated by both Bob Jacobs and myself because the statement made from each of us after 17 years matched. What was on the film was seen only twice by Bob Jacobs, once in Film Quality Control and once in my office at the CIA attended showing. I saw it four times. Once in my own quality control review and editing for the General and his staff, once in review with the Chief Scientist and his assistant, once for the Commanding General with only one of his staff, and the fourth time with the Chief Scientist, his assistant, the three government men and Bob Jacobs.

I ordered Lt. Jacobs not to discuss what he saw with anyone because of the nature of the launch, the failure of the launch mission and the probability that the optical instrumentation (the film) showed an interference with normal launch patterns. Now for your questions.

1. The object was saucer-shaped. (Dome? Don't remember.)
2. Do not know the names of the CIA personnel.
3. Only assumptions from the seriousness of the situation.
4. I was ordered not to discuss any of what was seen or discussed during the screenings. I only passed my order, as the ranking optical instrumentation officer, on to Lieutenant Jacobs. There was no one else involved.
5. No film was ever released from our archives without a signature. I even signed out film when we had launch showings to VIPs in the General's office on short notice. However, I released the film to the Chief Scientist over his signature, then they departed.
6. The articles in the Enquirer and OMNI on my part and the statements [illegible] by both Dr. Jacobs and myself were factual. The statements you [illegible] to that an "Air Force spokesman said, 'there is nothing on [illegible] and that the rocket did hit its target." makes no sense. [illegible] the film is available and the records of the launch and [illegible] are also available. If the Air Force spokesman did review [illegible] launch and saw nothing, it would not have been the [illegible] perpetuated such quick security action.

7. Further? If the government wishes to withold such vital information which most certainly relates to our basic Star Wars research, then this information must be protected.

Working in special projects my entire Air Force career from the earliest airborne radar in WWII, Air Defense Systems during the Korean War, Airborne Reconnaissance Systems during the Cold War, Photo computerized systems of unprecedented utilization and intelligence gathering during the Vietnam conflict, (therefore a veteran of four wars and more combat area time than most), I may be over protective of our security.

I can only say in regard to your research that in all my activities to date, indications point to one fact...the information gathered from space is very favorable to our side.

Sincerely yours,

F. J. Mansmann, ScD.

cally, he referred to the group screening in his office as "the CIA attended meeting," and later noted that he didn't "know the names of the CIA personnel."[8] However, some eight years later, Mansmann told Curt Collier that the film had been confiscated by "Government Agents." The subsequent use of this vague term seems curious, given the retired major's earlier specificity.

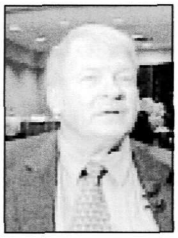
(For the record: In the same 1987 letter to Crain, Mansmann had also written that *three*, not two, agents were present in his office that day. In my view, this particular discrepancy is inconsequential and may be attributed to an inadvertent error, or a fading memory of a decades-old event. In every other written statement about the agents—at least those with which I am familiar—Mansmann reported that two men were present. Furthermore, to his credit, Mansmann, when recalling the filmed UFO encounter in his letter to Peter Bons, had candidly admitted that the "details would be sketchy and from memory." I think this is a very reasonable and telling comment. In all of his correspondence on the case, Mansmann never once attempted to portray his recollections as flawless or complete.)

Jacobs also noted Mansmann's apparent hedging regarding the affiliation of the men in civilian suits. During one of our 1995 telephone conversations, Bob sounded somewhat puzzled, saying, "At one time, [Mansmann] was openly referring to those guys as CIA. Nowadays, he calls them 'government agents.' I don't know what's going on there. Maybe he's decided not to openly talk about the CIA being involved."

Despite this remark, I suspect that Jacobs understood the reasons for Mansmann's guarded public posture regarding the "government men." A decade earlier, in his January 14, 1985, letter to Mansmann, he had written, "When Lee Graham tells me in a letter that you confirm the [warhead shoot-down] story but are 'reluctant to make any inquiry . . . for fear of reprisal from the agency that appropriated the film,' I shudder in my boots. . . . Over two decades after the filming of a 'warning shot,' must we still fear 'reprisal' for seeking answers to what may be the innermost secrets of the cosmos itself?"

Some critics of Mansmann's testimony, and the Big Sur case in general, doubt that the CIA would have had any jurisdiction over—or even much interest in—the alleged warhead shoot-down incident. These persons contend that the agency had only a peripheral, sporadic interest in UFOs over the years. They note that, at least officially, UFO investigations and policy decisions were almost always under U.S. Air Force jurisdiction. Therefore, these critics reason, the CIA would not have been directly involved in the Big Sur case in any manner.

In response to those who doubt that CIA agents would have been present in Mansmann's office—or who similarly contend that the CIA has never played a central role in the U.S. government's cover-up of UFOs—I will briefly mention a strikingly similar situation, occurring some two decades after Big Sur, in which another CIA-orchestrated suppression of UFO data has been alleged by an authoritative source.



John Callahan

John Callahan , a now-retired high-level administrator with the Federal Aviation Administration, is on the record regarding the CIA's direct and dominant role in an important UFO incident in November 1986.

While in Alaskan airspace, a Japanese Airlines pilot had sighted and tracked on radar a huge, walnut-shaped UFO as it maneuvered near his aircraft. Ground-based FAA and USAF radars also tracked the object for up to 31 minutes. When word of the remarkable encounter reached the press, it generated headlines worldwide.

The next day, according to Callahan, a small group of FBI and CIA employees and others unexpectedly arrived at FAA headquarters to be briefed on the sighting. During the meeting, "one of the guys from the CIA" ordered everyone present sworn to secrecy. The same individual also ordered the FAA to turn over its radar, air traffic voice communications, and written records relating to the incident—in the interests of national security. Despite this official order, Callahan more or less intentionally withheld some of the data on the case, which he later unapologetically released to researchers.

Callahan said that at one point during the meeting, after he had asked whether the secrecy relating to the sighting was actually warranted, the same CIA employee "got all excited" and told him that there would be no official acknowledgement of the UFO, given the potential for public panic.[9]

Although the officially nonexistent meeting at FAA headquarters occurred in November 1986, Callahan's statements bear more than a little similarity to the account provided by Mansmann, regarding the secret "CIA-attended" meeting at Vandenberg AFB in September 1964. Both men unequivocally report that the agency had confidently confiscated important UFO evidence, suggesting an official jurisdiction superseding the Air Force's own role, at least in these two incidents.

Given the specifics of Callahan's story, and considering his professional credibility—he had been the FAA's Division Chief of the Accidents and Investigations Branch—I accept the report he provides as credible. By extension, I must also respectfully disagree with those critics who contend that CIA-involvement in the Big Sur UFO incident can be automatically and indisputably ruled out. Considering the obvious national security implications relating to nuclear weapons testing, the agency's participation in the coverup of the UFO incident seems plausible, in my view.

KINGSTON GEORGE ENTERS THE PICTURE

If Bob Jacobs's account regarding the Big Sur UFO incident is "all true," as Florenz Mansmann asserts, then it is arguably the most dramatic case on record of apparent UFO interference with one of our nuclear weapon systems. As such, its importance cannot be overstated. While the actual motivation behind the apparent shooting down of the dummy warhead remains unknown—Jacobs has speculated that it was designed to convey displeasure over our possession of nuclear weapons—the act itself was nevertheless unmistakably provocative and, from a technological perspective, absolutely astounding.

But did the UFO encounter actually occur as Jacobs and Mansmann have portrayed?

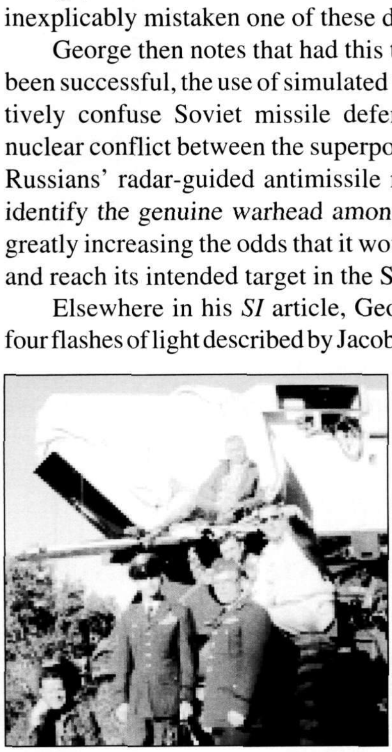
In its Winter 1993 issue, *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine, published by the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP, but renamed in 2006 as the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry), featured an article entitled, "The Big Sur 'UFO': An *Identified* Flying Object," written by Kingston A. George.[10] In September 1964, George had been the project engineer for the experimental telescopic tracking and filming of Atlas missile launches at the Big Sur site. In that role he had worked directly with Jacobs. Therefore, one would think, George would be an authoritative source on the subject of the alleged events described by Jacobs and Mansmann. Indeed, he claims to be exactly that.

Given CSICOP's well-established position of debunking all UFO sightings, it is not too difficult to guess the tone of George's article. He begins by dismissing Jacobs's "weird claims" and then offers an alternate, prosaic explanation for the events captured on the film in question. In fact, George claims to know precisely what took place because, he says, he viewed the film himself.

George maintains that the payload atop the Atlas missile was an experimental enemy radar-defeating system designed to release six simulated warheads—decoys—in addition to the unarmed dummy warhead. According to George, when Jacobs viewed the film of the test, he had inexplicably mistaken one of these decoys for the "UFO."

George then notes that had this test (and similar ones) been successful, the use of simulated warheads might effectively confuse Soviet missile defenses, in the event of nuclear conflict between the superpowers. In principle, the Russians' radar-guided antimissile missiles would fail to identify the genuine warhead among the decoys, thereby greatly increasing the odds that it would escape destruction and reach its intended target in the Soviet Union.

Elsewhere in his *SI* article, George contends that the four flashes of light described by Jacobs (who had called them "beams of energy") were actually momentary luminous bursts or "blooms" on the Image Orthicon's extremely light-sensitive screen. According to George, there were only three blooms. A bright exhaust plume created the first, as the Reentry Vehicle separated from the Atlas's sustainer tank. The second and third blooms, he says, were caused by the small explosive charges used to release the decoys from the tank.



Telescope crew at Big Sur. Kingston A. George is in sunglasses pointing at camera, Maj. Florenz Mansmann is standing at center left.

Consequently, George claims, Jacobs simply misinterpreted the objects and events he saw on the film screened in Mansmann's office. He asserts that everything related to the ICBM launch is reasonably explained without invoking Jacobs's "weird" scenario involving aliens from outer space.

After dismissing Jacobs's basic contention of UFO interference with the experimental warhead test, George then alleges other "fundamental flaws" in the former lieutenant's article. For example, George says that Jacobs incorrectly referred to the Atlas missile's trajectory as "orbital," meaning that it was programmed to circle the Earth. In reality, writes George, the flight was suborbital. This point is apparently designed to raise questions about Jacobs's basic understanding of the launch and test.

Actually, it is George who has it wrong: He has misquoted Jacobs! Nowhere in the *MUFON UFO Journal* article does Jacobs refer to the missile's flight as being orbital. On the contrary, regarding the events immediately following the four flashes of light observed emanating from the UFO, Jacobs writes, "Subsequently, the warhead malfunctioned and tumbled out of *suborbit* [my emphasis] hundreds of miles short of its target." Elsewhere in the article, he refers to the missile's "suborbital capsule." However, Jacobs does state that the UFO "flew a relative polar orbit around our warhead," which is undoubtedly the source of George's misquote.

In addition to this error, George also misrepresents another of Jacobs's key statements. After accurately noting that Jacobs had referred to the UFO directing "a beam of energy" at the dummy warhead, George goes on to claim that Jacobs had referred to the luminous ray as "a laser beam." George then says, quite correctly, that a laser beam would not be visible in space, which is essentially where the warhead was at the time of the incident.

The problem is this: Jacobs never actually referred to the UFO's four beams of light as laser beams. He did say, however, that after he viewed the film in Mansmann's office, the major had ordered him to call the beams "flashes from [USAF] laser tracking," should anyone ever ask Jacobs about the incident.

So George has regrettably misquoted Jacobs yet again. Considering this inattentive, highly misleading critique in *Skeptical Inquirer*, I feel compelled to emphasize the point: Bob Jacobs, in his *MUTUAL UFO Journal* article, referred to each of the four luminous pulses as "a beam of energy, possibly a plasma beam." Most plasmas, depending on their density, are indeed visible in space—the aurora borealis, for example, or the ionized atmosphere that envelops the Space Shuttle as it returns to Earth.

If—I say if—the beams of light described by Jacobs (and Mansmann) were discharges from a plasma-based, directed-energy weapon, they would very likely be visible on film, just as the two former officers have reported. Regardless, George's inaccurate version of Jacobs' admittedly speculative statements concerning the beams is unacceptable.

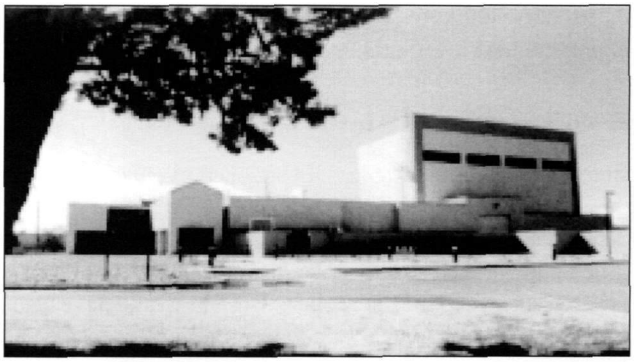
(In the interest of fairness, I will note here that Jacobs has acknowledged certain factual errors in his own 1989 article. For example, he estimated that the missile's nose cone had separated at 60 nautical miles altitude, whereas the actual altitude was apparently 200 nautical miles. Similarly, he had initially gauged the warhead's velocity at the time of the UFO encounter at 18,000 mph. In a subsequent interview, however, he more accurately estimated it was traveling between 11,000 and 14,000 mph. Declassified data confirm that the nose-cone separation occurred at just under 11,000 mph. Jacobs and Mansmann agree that the shoot-down event took place shortly thereafter.)

On the subject of the "beams of light" reportedly released by the UFO, I recently asked Jacobs to elaborate on his brief, published description of them. After a thoughtful pause, he responded, "I wouldn't want to say that they looked like lightning bolts, but the appearance was similar. They definitely didn't look like a laser beam would, say in a laboratory experiment. There was an extremely bright flash, coming from just below the cupola on the object. From the center of the flash there was a luminous beam, or bolt, extending all the way from the UFO to the warhead. That happened four times, as the object circled the warhead. That's the best way to describe what we saw."

In this instance, Jacobs was not only referring to the images he and Mansmann saw during the restricted screening of the film, but also to one tiny feature discovered during Mansmann's enhanced optical analysis of the footage: Jacobs had personally observed the beams' general appearance on film; however, when he describes each beam originating from just below the UFO's "cupola" or dome, he is reporting on a detail later provided to him by Mansmann.

Despite some critics' claims to the contrary, there is nothing physically impossible about the warhead being bumped out of its programmed trajectory, as reported. The scientific principle governing the modification of an object's direction in space when subjected to an outside force is well understood. The UFO's beam-release, as described by Jacobs and Mansmann in their private letters and published statements, would appear to be this kind of event. Each of the former officers reports observing on film four beams of light being directed at the warhead, after which it tumbled out of suborbit.

Of course, nudging a nuclear warhead out of its intended trajectory—or even destroying it—with a plasma beam is beyond our current capabilities. Nevertheless, there apparently has been extensive but classified research relating to the latter, using a directed-energy weapon, albeit one based on the ground, not in space. In 2001, the authoritative *Jane's Defence Weekly* featured a story saying that such a project had been initiated by the U.S. Air Force over a decade ago, and further noted that the research may have continued on a covert basis after the project's official termination.


Aerospace Engineering Facility at Kirtland AFB, constructed in 1996 by Phillips Laboratory.

Referring to the USAF's highly secret Phillips Laboratory (now the Air Force Research Laboratory's Space Vehicles Directorate at Kirtland), *JDW's* aerospace consultant Nick Cook wrote, "In the early 1990s, the U.S. Air Force was preparing tests at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, designed to lead to a ground-based plasma-weapon in the late 1990s capable of firing plasma bullets at incoming ballistic missile warheads. The enabling technology was a 'fast capacitor bank' called Shiva Star that could store 10 million joules of energy and release it instantaneously. Officials anticipated firing bullets at 3,000 km/sec in 1995 and 10,000 km/sec—3% of the speed of light—by the turn of the century.... Dumped into the 'soft' electronics of a re-entry vehicle, the bullets were envisaged as destroying multiple manoeuvring warheads at rapid reacquisition rates. By the second half of the last decade, the Shiva/plasma bullet programme was officially dropped. Observers have remarked on how its sudden disappearance at the time the firing tests were scheduled was redolent of a transition to the classified environment."[11]

Therefore, while the composition of the beams of light described by Jacobs and Mansmann remains unknown, it's possible that efforts are underway at present to develop our own plasma-based, directed-energy weapons. Even if the Air Force program described above was not shifted to the Black Project realm, but was discontinued as officially announced, it nevertheless seems that such weapons have been seriously investigated by the U.S. military as a means to bring down incoming nuclear warheads.

If the Big Sur UFO incident occurred as portrayed by Jacobs and Mansmann, then it would appear that someone (or something) else, vastly ahead of us technologically, has already achieved this type of shoot-down capability. Jacobs has speculated that those responsible for the act somehow let a few of our military leaders in on their little secret in advance, and anticipated the subsequent filming of the event. I disagree with this particular contention and consider the scenario unlikely. To my knowledge, Mansmann never expressed his view on this possibility.

A QUESTION OF IMAGE RESOLUTION

But would the remarkable, UFO-related events, assuming they occurred, actually be visible on the film, at least in the detail described by Jacobs and Mansmann? After all, at the time of the alleged incident, the distance between the separated warhead and the telescope at Big Sur would have been significant. Indeed, recent calculations performed by former Minuteman missile launch officer Bob Salas, at my request, suggest that the nose-cone separation occurred some 470 nautical miles *from the camera*.[12] Jacobs had earlier estimated that the UFO made its appearance several seconds, perhaps more than a minute, after the warhead itself separated from the nose cone—"as we neared the end of the camera run."

Published Atlas launch data indicate that the nose-cone-separation event occurs at 5.3 minutes (T+320 seconds), at which point the nose-cone package is 475 nautical miles *downrange*, and 200 nautical miles in altitude.[13] Bob Salas used these data—as well as the geographical coordinates of the launch site, the telescope site, and the intended splashdown site—to trigonometrically derive the approximate distance between Big Sur and the nose-cone release. The mathematical result is obviously an estimate, given that the nose-cone package at the point of its separation from the missile launcher was traveling at nearly 11,000 mph (about 3 miles per second).

So, given these data, and quantitative estimates, would the alleged shoot-down incident be visible on film? Kingston George claims that *all* the objects at that distance—the warhead, the radar experiment, the nose cone, even the alleged UFO—would have appeared only as mere specks of glinting sunlight, due to an effect known as "specular reflection."

Actually, Jacobs has partially substantiated this assertion. In a letter to researcher T. Scott Crain Jr., dated July 25, 1986, Jacobs wrote that when he viewed the film in Mansmann's office, the UFO had appeared only as a rapidly-maneuvering "small point of light." However, he also wrote, "Mansmann, who inspected the film with a magnifier, says that the object was saucer-shaped with a dome on top."[14]

As noted earlier, Mansmann confirms this statement and has written, "The shape was [a] classic disc, the center seemed to be a raised bubble . . . the entire lower saucer shape . . . was glowing and seemed to be rotating slowly. At the point of beam release—if it was a beam, it, the object, turned like an object required to be in a position to fire from a platform."

Therefore, according to Mansmann, a thorough analysis of the anomalous point of light, utilizing a simple form of image enlargement, had confirmed that it was a bona fide UFO and revealed some degree of detail relating to both its structure and movement. While Kingston George may claim that no such detail would be visible in any object at that distance, Mansmann has clearly and repeatedly stated otherwise. Although the incident almost certainly occurred hundreds of miles beyond the point at which the nose cone separated from the missile—the exact distance may never be known—Mansmann has been specific and steadfast in his description of the UFO's appearance on film.

Regarding the object's dimensions, Mansmann wrote, "Telescopic photography of that magnitude makes sizes indeterminable. We knew the missile size but could not compare [that with the UFO] since we did not know how far from the missile the 'object' was at time of beam release."[15]

It is worth noting that when Mansmann screened the film in 1964, he already possessed extensive observational and photo-interpretation experience. As he later told Curt Collier, "By the time of this missile launch, I was a trained officer in Aerial Observation and a Combat Radar Navigator in World War II, a Director of Operations for the Ground Observer Corps during the Korean and Cold War conflicts, a trained Aerial Reconnaissance Officer . . . and photo interpreter for clandestine operations for three years during the Berlin Airlifts."[16] Considering these facts, one would think that Mansmann, who had reviewed the film in question at least three times, would be capable of distinguishing between a featureless, twinkling speck of light, and a "classic disc" UFO with a dome.

Significantly, Kingston George's assessment of the Big Sur telescope's design performance is also a matter of record. Bob Jacobs's 1989 *MUFON UFO Journal* article cites an official 1964 USAF report written by George, in which he had described the then-experimental telescope/camera system's capabilities. As the project engineer, George stated that one of the goals of the filming was to record "minute events following propellant depletion—at distances of from 300 to 800 nautical miles."[17]

However, in his 1993 *Skeptical Inquirer* article, George seems to downplay his earlier, official assessment of the system's resolution at that range. Given his published comments pertaining to specular reflection, he now appears to contend that while various "minute events" related to the launches were indeed visible at great distances, the missile components themselves would have appeared only as points of light, exhibiting no discernable detail.

Regardless, George's more recent, apparently more modest portrayal of the telescope's capabilities is strikingly contradicted by photo-interpretation expert Florenz Mansmann's contemporary and detailed assessment of the anomalous object captured on film. Once again, in his letter to Peter Bons, the retired major wrote that, given the UFO's domed-disc shape and amazing performance, "the assumption was, at that time, extraterrestrial."

I recently asked Jacobs to elaborate upon his earlier published comments relating to the number and type of objects visible in the field of view just before and during the shoot-down event. He responded, "We saw the nose cone separate and open up—it looked like an alligator's open jaws. We saw the experiment, which was metallic chaff, come out. We saw the dummy warhead come out and inject into a different [trajectory]. All of the other components, the chaff and so on, were all still flying along. They don't lose altitude all that quickly because of momentum. So, there were several objects visible when the UFO came into view."[18]

This description suggests that at the time of nose-cone separation—some 470 nautical miles from the telescope—certain of the ICBM's structural components were clearly visible, including the nose cone's two halves, as they split apart. However, by the time the UFO approached and circled the dummy warhead, the unidentified object appeared, at least on film, only as a "small point of light." Presumably, the warhead itself was minuscule as well. Mansmann has alluded to the difficulties involved in size-determination at those distances, but if we assume the UFO was at least 30 feet in diameter, the 11-foot-long Reentry Vehicle, containing the dummy warhead, would have appeared relatively smaller—unless the UFO was maneuvering well beyond the RV, from the camera's point-of-view. I think, however, the circling motion described by both Jacobs and Mansmann suggests that the object was fairly close to the warhead.

Regardless, the exact distance from the telescope to the alleged shoot-down event is unknown, at least by those in ufology who have researched the question. Therefore, in my opinion, it is presumptuous for anyone to suggest that there currently exists—at least in the public domain—an unassailable, absolutely quantifiable solution to the image-size issue. Having said that, Bob Salas's mathematical work does provide a reasonable estimate regarding the distance between the telescope and the missile, at the time of nose-cone separation. Once again, according to Jacobs and Mansmann, this routine event occurred shortly before the appearance of the UFO.

THE ACTUAL DATE OF THE INCIDENT

Arguably the single most crucial "fact" mentioned by George in his *Skeptical Inquirer* article is the date of the missile launch. He unequivocally says it took place on September 22, 1964. This assertion is central to his case because he claims to have personally screened the film of *that particular launch* and, therefore, claims to know exactly what it showed. Consequently, says George, he can confidently rule-out Jacobs's (and Mansmann's) controversial interpretation of the objects and events captured on film.

But what if George is wrong about the date of the launch described by Jacobs and Mansmann? Suppose he has inadvertently—I won't say intentionally—selected another Atlas launch during that time frame as the basis for his uncompromising, debunking commentary? Remarkably, published evidence now seems to confirm that this is indeed the case.

In his article in the *MUFON UFO Journal*, Jacobs had written that, although he could not pinpoint the exact date of the launch, information in his personal log indicated that the likely date was September 2, 3, or 15, 1964. Once George wrote his skeptical article—declaring that the launch had actually occurred on September 22—Jacobs quickly responded by saying that his log suggested that he was not even present at the Big Sur telescope site on that date.[19]

Furthermore, Jacobs had also candidly acknowledged that he could not remember the exact model of Atlas ICBM used to launch the enemy radar-defeating experiment and dummy warhead. While he thought that it had been an Atlas F, he admitted that it might have been an Atlas D.

In an effort to establish the actual launch date and type of missile involved, I wrote to Mark Wade, at Encyclopedia Astronautica (EA), and asked that he provide me with records relating to all Atlas launches at Vandenberg AFB during September 1964. Wade replied that while there was no record of an Atlas F being launched that month, there were two launches attributed to Atlas D's:

1964 Sep 15 - 15:27 GMT - **ABRES LORV-3 re-entry vehicle test flight** Vandenberg Launch Pad: 576A1 – Launch Vehicle: Atlas D 245D.

1964 Sep 22 - 13:08 GMT - **NTMP KX-19 Target mission** Vandenberg Launch Pad: 576A3 - Launch Vehicle: Atlas D 247D.

(The abridged summaries provided by Wade are derived from lengthier references published by EA—and are based on Commander's Launch Reports and other USAF records.)[20]

Upon receiving this information, the first thing that caught my eye was the launch on September 15, 1964. When I informed Jacobs about the published data, he responded, "Well, Robert, I think you've found the launch. The timing is exactly right [according to my personal records]. The date, September 15th, is one of the three I mentioned. I never believed the launch took place on September 22nd, which is what George keeps saying. The stated mission of that launch had nothing to do with the experiment we were doing the day of the incident. We were testing a reentry vehicle, just as [the published summary] says."

(The records published by EA state that the September 15 launch occurred at 15:27 Greenwich Mean Time, or 8:27 a.m. Pacific Daylight Time. In other words, it occurred in daylight, just as Jacobs remembered. In his 1989 article, he had mentioned his first glimpse of the ascending Atlas's fiery exhaust, as the missile "leaped through the snow-white coastal fog blanket" shrouding Vandenberg AFB, some 100 nautical miles southeast of the telescope site at Big Sur.)

The EA entries cited above indicate that the September 15 launch was designated an "ABRES LORV-3 re-entry vehicle test flight." These cumbersome acronyms translate to "Advanced Ballistic Reentry System" and "Low Observable Reentry Vehicle." In plain English, this is *precisely* the

(continued on page 20)

SANTA CATALINA CHANNEL
CLOUD CIGARS

BY ANN DRUFFEL

Author's Note: The following material was first discussed in an article in the *Proceedings of the 1976 CUFOS Conference.*[1] However, the intriguing research conducted on the subject of "cloud cigars" by Herbert S. Taylor, published in recent issues of *IUR,*[2] impelled me to bring the information in this 1976 paper, in somewhat edited form, to the attention of the UFO community. Although incomplete and in part speculative, the Southern California "cloud cigar" phenomenon affords the UFO research field an opportunity to study this particularly long-lived type of UFO with scientific instrumentation. It is hoped that readers of this paper will offer ideas on how such instrumentation can be obtained, set up, and maintained, or provide other suggestions on how these important UFO events can be further studied.

The transitory nature of most UFO sightings dismays researchers. In most reported cases, these unidentified objects appear unexpectedly to startled witnesses and in most cases are gone before any permanent record of their passage can be obtained. In rare instances, however, the appearance of UFOs can possibly be *foretold* by reason of their repeated occurrence in some particular region. One of these areas is over the Pacific Ocean between the mainland of Southern California and the offshore islands, notably Santa Catalina, which lies about 20 miles off the coast.

Most cloud cigars in this area have been seen within a rectangular area between 33°–34° Lat. and between 117.5°–119° Long. Other nearby areas, named for the cities and islands associated with them, are sometimes involved, but in most cases the cloud cigars were viewed between the mainland and the large offshore island of Santa Catalina (Figure 1).

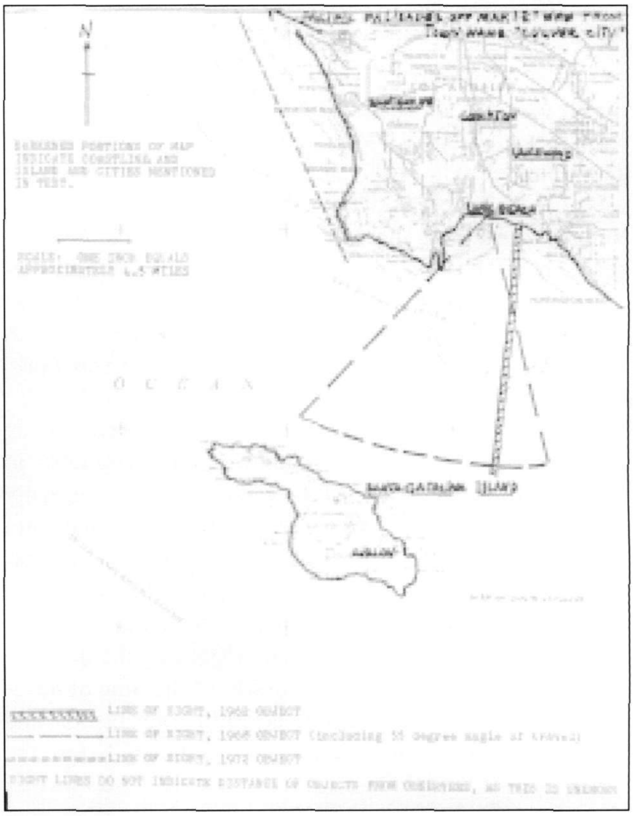

N
OCEAN
LONG BEACH
SANTA CATALINA ISLAND
AVALON
LINE OF SIGHT, 1962 OBJECT
LINE OF SIGHT, 1968 OBJECT (including 55 degree angle of travel)
LINE OF SIGHT, 1972 OBJECT
SIGHT LINES DO NOT INDICATE DISTANCE OF OBJECTS FROM OBSERVERS, AS THIS IS UNKNOWN

Fig. 1

THE 1962 MYSTERY

The first hint that the skies above the Santa Catalina Channel held more than seagulls occurred in 1962, toward the end of August on a Wednesday or Thursday, exact day uncertain. Two witnesses, of which this author (Druffel) was one and Mrs. James (Aileen) Cummings the other, had brought five of their small children, ages 8–3 years, for a leisurely day at the Long Beach seashore. About 2:00 p.m., I noticed a small, white, rectangular cloud, which looked exactly like a newly formed section of vapor trail. It seemed to be neatly sliced off at each end and, in a sense, "transplanted" in the blue, smogless sky. Its diameter, at arm's length, was about four millimeters, and its width was about one-half its length.

It was positioned at about 40° elevation and approximately 195° azimuth (magnetic) high in the sky. It seemed to be about midway between the shore and the island of Santa Catalina, which was clearly visible to the south and southwest.[3] There was no evidence of high-flying jets, no vapor trails or any clouds in that quadrant of sky. After about 15 minutes, I realized that it was not a normal vapor trail left by a high-flying jet aircraft. It was too short, too isolated, and did not change shape or size in the slightest. Neither did

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it move in any direction, in spite of a brisk, 15-knot wind blowing in from the ocean. I called Aileen's attention to it and, puzzled, we continued to observe the small white rectangle together. For about 30 more minutes it remained motionless, unchanged in size and shape.

Then something began to occur within the tiny cloud. Its white vapor began to "churn," presenting an impression of internal activity. It doubled or tripled its size; the time was now about 3:15 p.m. It still hovered at 40° elevation at the original azimuth. During the next half hour, it slowly enlarged into an oval shape and became 20–30 times its original size. Its apparent diameter had blossomed to four centimeters long and two centimeters wide at arm's length. It appeared to be solid, unlike a normal cloud. Its vaporous, oval shape was definite, and at no time did the edges dissipate beyond the perimeter. There was a constant churning motion all over its surface, which reminded me somewhat of water boiling in slow motion. The cloud/object seemed tipped at approximately 25°–30°, its longest diameter being positioned to our right (Figure 2).

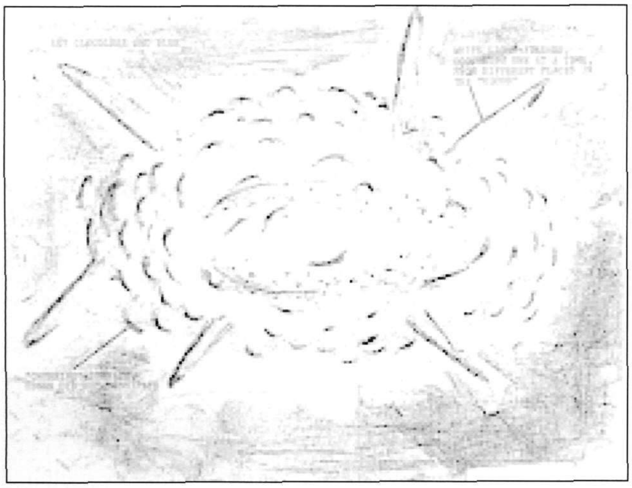

Fig. 2

The mysterious sight kept our attention, mainly because it seemed that "something" was inside its churning exterior. At times it seemed as though it were about to "open up" to reveal whatever might be lurking within. About 45 minutes after the formation of the oval, Aileen and I saw flashes of light coming from the object. The flashes were bright white and momentary, and they extended about a diameter's length out from the surface. They gave the impression of strong reflections from the bright sun off some metal surface within the cloud or, possibly, of electric discharges. However, they seemed to be, strangely, triangular in shape. At no time was any sound heard. The flashes were periodic, separated by minutes, with no regular rhythm. They were greatly disturbing to me, for two of my children were playing at the water's edge. I quickly waded out and brought them in, fearful that the "flashes" were somehow "electricity" and if one hit the water it could be fatal!

During the time the flashes were observed, numerous military jet trails were seen in the south, evidently over and beyond Catalina Island; their position in the sky seemed related more to San Clemente Island, which lies beyond Catalina.[4] We saw these trails 4°–10° above San Clemente, which rose about 3° above the horizon from our viewing position. None of the jet trails appeared within 30° of the churning, flashing cloud but instead remained far out over the Pacific. However, without doubt the trails indicated the presence of a number of highly active, military jets.

After watching the flashes for about 15 minutes and observing that no one else on the beach seemed to be watching the strange "cloud," Aileen and I approached a nearby lifeguard, hoping he could lend us some binoculars so we could get a closer view of the activity within the cloud. He denied having any binoculars; when we tried to explain to him about the strange cloud he showed no interest whatsoever. He glanced up briefly, announced that it was "just a cloud" and then continued surveying the water in pursuit of his lifeguard duties, totally ignoring us.

About 5:00 p.m., Aileen and I collected our small children, for it was time to make the 35-mile drive back to our Pasadena homes to cook dinner for our husbands, who would be returning home from work. We left reluctantly, pausing several times during the quarter-mile walk to our cars to stare at the object. The flashing had stopped, but the cloudy oval still hung motionless in the sky. We discussed reporting the incident to the local newspaper, the *Long Beach Press-Telegram,* but rationalized that the object *must* have been seen on the beach that day by others and would be reported by someone who lived in the Long Beach area. For by the time we had to leave, it had been in plain view for more than three hours. However, careful monitoring of radio and television programs that evening and the next few days, as well as copies of the *Press-Telegram*, indicated, to our complete surprise, that there was never any media coverage of the event.[5]

As awed as Aileen and I had felt over the cloud's strange exterior, the activity within it was so inexplicable that we both felt inadequate to even verbalize it. We remained totally unaware of the possible significance of the occurrence until years later. Consequently, for many years it went unreported until I presented the paper at the 1976 CUFOS conference, together with sketches drawn by an associate. In the intervening years, further correlative material on the possible significance of our 1962 sighting had surfaced.

THE 1968 CLOUD CIGAR

The second instance of a "vaporous cloud" over the Catalina Channel occurred on July 9, 1968. By this time, the Los Angeles NICAP Subcommittee had established Skynet, a tracking system and filter center designed to collect and investigate public UFO reports, and I had accepted the position of project coordinator.

On that summer evening, the phones rang off their

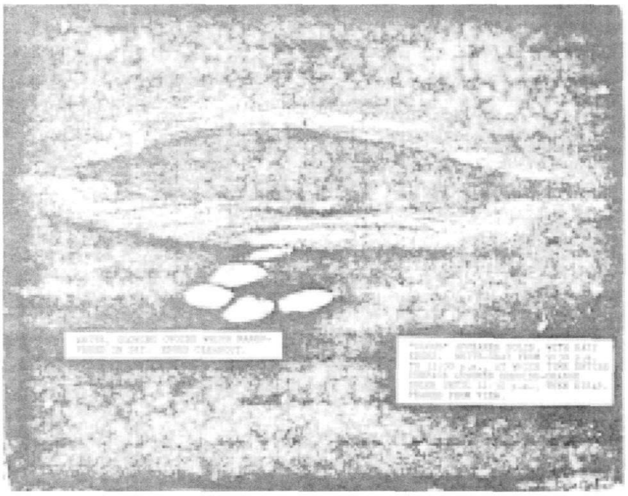

Fig. 3

hooks at my Pasadena home. Thirty air miles south in Long Beach and in surrounding communities, citizens began reporting a large, glowing mass positioned high over the Catalina Channel (Figure 3). The first call came from a group of five teenagers gathered at the home of Kevin Allgreen, three miles north of the shoreline. At 9:35 p.m. they had noticed a gray-white, solid-appearing "cloud" under the full moon in the south-southeast. At 10:05 it began moving 55° in a horizontal line toward the west. By 10:15 it had returned, intact, to its original position near the moon. Maneuvering near the large object were five smaller cloud-like objects, oval-shaped with clean-cut edges. Two of these were grayish and three were described as "kind of white."

The boys, ages 13–18 years, viewed the objects through binoculars and determined that all of the unknown masses looked "solid." They kept their shape and precise edges throughout subsequent maneuvers. Although the edges of the larger object seemed "fuzzy" they were nevertheless clean-cut. It certainly was not a normal cloud because it moved too fast during its brief journey westward and back again, traveling 55° each way in 10 minutes. It was many times the size of the smaller accompanying objects and an estimated 5–6 times the diameter of the full moon. The end facing west was long and narrow, and the part facing east was shaped "like a diamond."

The boys were convinced that they were viewing something highly unusual. They estimated the main mass was about 10 miles high. Around 11:00 p.m., the large object turned reddish-orange in color and began traveling upward at an approximate angle of 30°. By 11:30 it "just faded away," taking five minutes to dissipate out of sight.

Following hard on the teenagers' first call, the family of Mr. I. Castano of Compton also called Skynet. From their home seven miles north of the Long Beach witnesses, the family had viewed a group of four oval, cloud-like objects the size of pinheads at arm's length, or roughly about one-eighth the size of the full moon. First seen at 9:30 p.m. and disappearing at 10:00 p.m., they were glowing white with precise edges. They were gathered around the moon when first seen, and then started departing to the right and the left.

"They seemed to be far out in space. The objects spread out and then dashed toward one another," Castano related, adding, "It looked like some kind of a war!" To Castano, who had never before believed in the existence of UFOs, the event was completely mystifying.[6] The Castanos did not report seeing the large cloud, probably because their home was several miles further inland than the Long Beach witnesses. Were they seeing the smaller objects, moving inward from the channel?

Another report that seems to validate the above speculation comes from the files of Paul Wilson, a local UFO researcher. His neighbors, Michael and Leslie G., informed him that they had seen a glowing UFO about 9:30 or 10:00 p.m. on the same night. It traveled toward their home in Hawthorne (15 air miles northwest of Long Beach), approaching from the east. It was oval and slightly smaller than the full moon. It was shiny white with clean-cut edges, seemed to be several miles away, and traveled toward the south away from the moon and back again. It was soundless, "spun in an apparent circle around the moon," and afterwards let off streams of smoke or vapor from its side. The duration of their sighting was 20 minutes.[7]

From the similarities in description from the Castano and G. families, it might be assumed that they were viewing the smaller objects during a foray inland. The Castanos saw four objects, the G's a single one. Had the five small objects associated with the main cloud-mass split up into two groups, while the main object or "cloud cigar" hovered high over the Pacific?

While all of this activity was going on, Skynet was making frantic efforts to obtain additional witnesses and documentation. The only Skynet member residing near the coast, Jim Griebel, was contacted. His home was three miles north of the five witnesses at the Long Beach home of Kevin Allgreen. Through binoculars, Griebel could see a cloud-like conglomeration low on the southerly horizon. He wasn't certain whether it was comprised of one or two masses, but the mass(es) seemed diamond-shaped on one end and rounded on the other, similar to the witnesses' descriptions at the Allgreen home. The bright light from the moon interfered with Griebel's view, but there seems little doubt that he was seeing the primary cloud-object that was being viewed from Long Beach. Including Griebel, 12 witnesses from four independent groups reported the July 9 event.[8]

Nothing about the above cases seemed to click into place at the time of their occurrences. The 1962 case remained an enigma for 13 years, shoved back into the inner recesses of Aileen Cummings's and my own minds. That "something" could appear from almost "nothing" and retain shapes, position, and activity for over three hours was inexplicable to us. The 1968 case, however, which lasted at least an hour and one-half, was considered a possible cloud cigar. Aimé Michel had described this UFO type in his classic book, *Flying Saucers and the Straight-Line Mystery*, so the term and description were familiar to us.[9]

THE ENGMA OF 1973

On December 20, 1973, another mystery occurred over the Pacific Ocean between the mainland and Santa Catalina Island. This sighting was as bizarre and long-lived as the two that had gone before. Although at first glance it appeared unassociated with the vaporous masses in the first two events, further study has demonstrated that all three phenomena had many factors in common. Since Herbert S. Taylor has sought additional cases which seem to fit within cloud-cigar phenomena, this case is being placed in the literature.

About 2:15 a.m. on December 20, Michael Wagner of Pacific Palisades noticed a yellow, glowing "blob" hovering in the south-southeast at an elevation of approximately 20°. He called it to the attention of Robert B. Klinn, noted in UFO circles as a skilled researcher and at that time a member of Skynet. Their viewing position was about 20 miles northwest of Long Beach. Wagner and Klinn took turns studying the light through a 16× Navy spyglass, which they were able to steady on a ledge at Klinn's residence. As seen through the telescope, the "blob" resolved into a precise arrangement of round, yellow-gold lights. Although the entire mass appeared larger than Venus with the naked eye, through the scope the lights encompassed an area of approximately 3 millimeters. They were arranged in a vertical column, bisecting a horizontal column of equal length. As the witnesses watched, additional columns of light appeared and arranged themselves into a nearly perfect light-studded triangle.

The witnesses adjusted the telescope; when Klinn again looked through it about three minutes later, the complex of lights had assumed the shape of a huge, cigar-shaped "machine." Its edges were clear-cut against the sky. On its side was a horizontal row of about five huge, fiery round lights which ran along the length of the object. These lights were very much larger and brighter than the ones observed earlier; in fact, the entire object had expanded in size at least 20 times (Figure 4).

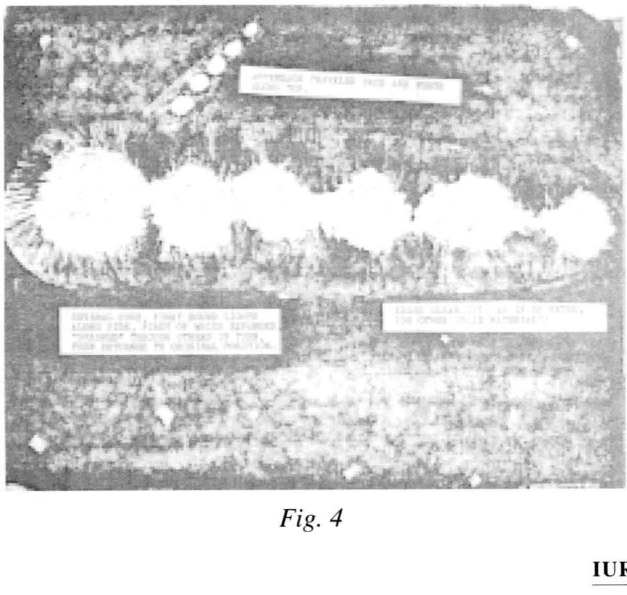

Fig. 4

Each light held tremendous activity within it, "as if looking inside a boiling steel furnace, and even more so." Their primary color was yellow, but many other colors were visible in their teeming mass. As the witnesses watched astounded, the first light ballooned up "like a critical explosion" and smashed through the light directly to its right. That one in turn seemed to flare up, as did each of the others, as the first fireball traversed the entire row. At the extreme right, the fiery, explosive light paused and pulsated about twice per second; then the smashing reaction returned along the row of lights from right to left. The entire trip back and forth took an estimated 13 seconds.

As this was happening, a fin-shaped appendage with a vertical row of smaller yellow lights was moving back and forth along the top of the cigar-shaped object "in a very mechanical way." Meantime, the entire object, which now covered more than 1½ centimeters in the scope's field of view, was moving slowly westward at an estimated 5° per hour. Toward the end of the sighting, which lasted about 90 minutes, the object changed shape once more. The appendage on top widened, the lights flickered out, and the object became a darkened cone-shape with a rounded bottom. One faint red light blinked with regular rhythm on the top. Then the object faded from view at 3:37 a.m.[10]

ATTEMPTS AT CORRELATION

The July 1968 manifestation, at least, seemed to fit into a recognized UFO class, that of the so-called cloud cigar, widely assumed to be a conglomerate of smaller discs, alternate names being "carrier craft" or "mother ship." But the 1962 and 1973 sightings cannot so easily be categorized. Both of these objects changed shape, grew larger and more complex, and demonstrated intense activity reminiscent of internal electrical discharges. Is it possible that the 1962 sighting, and the 1973 sighting as well, were incidents of "materialization" into our space-time?

In trying to determine with witness Bob Klinn the possibility that what he had seen was related in some way with the 1962 and 1968 objects, Klinn pointed out that there was no cloud or vapor associated with it. He felt that the 1973 object was a "metallic structure" and that he was viewing the clashing spheres through "holes" of some kind in its side. However, in order for the 1973 witnesses to view the activity within in its entirety, the side of the object might have been transparent or otherwise open to view. Is it possible that the object was not metal but some other sort of solid, though transparent, material? Could Klinn and Wagner have been viewing a similar type of cigar-shaped solid structure that had been surrounded by thick haze during the summer sightings of 1962 and 1968?

EVENTS AFTER 1973

After 1973, I became involved in so-called abduction cases, which had begun to overwhelm the UFO research field around our nation. Such cases were being reported from Tujunga Canyon, about 10 miles northeast of Los Angeles. This research did not give me much time to avidly pursue the continuing Skynet reports of cloud-cigar phenomena. After *The Tujunga Canyon Contacts* was published with co-author D. Scott Rogo in 1980,[11] the intensity of Skynet investigations slowly declined as other research projects and full-time work with a local research organization made it hard for me to devote the tremendous amount of time the continuing cloud-cigar type reports required. But other such reports did continue to occur in the same 5–6-year time periods. I include a few such case reports here in order to reinforce this fact. Their inclusion will, I hope, make my call for instrumental observation of this area that much more compelling.

On January 24, 1979, an avid amateur astronomer with many years experience, Brad Bell, who lived in North Hollywood, observed an unidentified, glowing spherical object over the Pacific area through a three-inch refracting telescope, at 20× amplification. The object was stationary at 35° above the Pacific, at 225° true heading, WSW over the Catalina Channel. The time was 5:15 p.m., just on the verge of twilight. The object looked "like an opaque bubble, like milk stirred in water."[12] It was whitish in color, pearl-like, and remained stationary in the sky, moving very slowly down to 15° from the horizon, where Bell's telescope no longer showed it clearly. He had been viewing it for over an hour.

"Anyone knowing astronomy would have noticed the object," Brad Bell stated when he reported the sighting to Skynet. He called the Griffith Observatory in Hollywood to report the anomalous object, and a worker at the observatory ran outside to see if they could view it. However, they could not see the luminous sphere, indicating that it was not an ordinary astronomical object.

Also fitting in with the six-year period between the long-lasting anomalous channel sightings, in 1985 (month and date uncertain), Henry T. Nowicki was working on his ranch in Pauma Valley when he viewed a round, iridescent cloud of "unusual shape and color" around 3:00 p.m. in a clear blue sky. Pauma Valley is in San Diego County, about 90 miles south of Los Angeles Civic Center. The object was seen in the west, about one-quarter up from the horizon toward the zenith, over the Pacific Ocean. Nowicki, a retired rancher, held a master's degree in environmental science and engineering. He estimated the object to be about 6,000 feet high, and at first he thought it might be a missile launching from Vandenberg Air Force Base up the coast. As he watched it, however, he realized that the "cloud" was not moving in the sky. He called a neighbor, B. C., to view it with him and together they watched the object for a full hour.[13] It remained in one place during that entire time, maintaining its round shape and iridescent, glowing characteristics, after which it simply, in Nowicki's words, "disappeared."

Some six years later, on October 28, 1991, a witness, Annie B., was walking with a friend, N. J., headed north on 4th Street in Hollywood.[14] At 1:10 p.m., they viewed a cluster of three round, white "balls" in the northern sky, which soon were joined by "two oblong dark objects" which "just appeared" on either side. The cluster of objects remained in place for 10–15 minutes. At first the witnesses thought they might be balloons, but their ability to stay precisely in place in the sky precluded that explanation.

Suddenly, off to their left (west), three more white balls appeared which "moved erratically." The attention of the witnesses soon focused back on the three original objects in the northern sky which soon "faded back into space gradually, either dematerializing or moving off into the distance." Sometime during this 10–15-minute period, a large orange object was seen in the west, apparently over the Pacific Ocean and in the general area as the erratically moving balls of light. This object, in Annie B.'s words, "came into the picture or was there, I can't remember." Annie B. explained that she could not say how long the much larger orange object was in the sky because her attention, and that of her friend, had been totally engaged in watching the other multiple objects. This large orange object was oval in shape with what seemed to be cone-shaped streamers projecting down from the bottom.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The purpose of the original 1976 paper, on which this article is based, had been to alert researchers to the fact of recurring, long-lived phenomena in the Catalina Channel area and to point out that much value to UFO research might be gained if this region could have been placed under surveillance with scientific instrumentation. There are two main reasons why this was suggested in 1976 and is again encouraged in 2006:

1. The Catalina Channel cloud-cigar sightings have apparently continued through subsequent years, up to the present, although they have not been thoroughly investigated as were the three instances detailed above. These cloud-cigar sightings are long-lasting (1½–3 hours at present knowledge) giving Southland researchers more than adequate time to activate a surveillance system.
2. In the Catalina Channel area, at least, cloud-cigars occurred every 5–6 years on a more or less regular basis.[15]

The Channel area has for the past 40+ years abounded in UFO reports of all types—even surface and underwater UFOs have been reported—but the great majority of these sightings have been unclear and short-lived, compared to the long-lasting "cloud cigars." In light of this, continuing research on the cloud-cigar phenomena over the Santa Catalina Channel seems to be an extremely worthwhile investment in surveillance equipment and research time.

CONCLUSION

It is important to reiterate six points concerning the cloud-cigar phenomenon, as manifested in southern California:

(continued on page 24)

DAVID GRIGGS AND THE FOO FIGHTERS

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

Admittedly, I'm not the UFO field's foo fighter expert, but the information in this article adds something to the story and our knowledge of these strange observations. Nor is what I report so complicated that a *real* expert—such as Don Berliner, Barry Greenwood, or Jan Aldrich—is required to unravel it. For background, you can read Jerry Clark's typically excellent review of the phenomenon in his *UFO Encyclopedia* to get the bigger picture. But what I relate here is something that, I believe, is not in the literature and is thus worth reporting to the knowledgeable readers of *IUR*.

David Griggs was considered by the military's expert scientific consultants to be the scientist with the best direct information on the mysterious foo fighters. During the notorious January 1953 CIA Robertson Panel, these anomalous experiences were referred to as follows:

> *On Lack of Danger*
>
> The Panel concluded unanimously that there was no evidence of a direct threat to national security in the objects sighted. Instances of "Foo Fighters" were cited. These were unexplained phenomena sighted by aircraft pilots during World War II in both European and Far East theaters of operation wherein "balls of light" would fly near or with the aircraft and maneuver rapidly. They were believed to be electrostatic (similar to St. Elmo's fire) or electromagnetic phenomena or possibly light reflections from ice crystals in the air, but their exact cause or nature was never defined. Both Robertson and Alvares [sic] had been concerned in the investigation of these phenomena, but David T. Griggs (Professor of Geophysics at the University of California at Los Angeles) is believed to have been the most knowledgeable person on this subject. If the term "flying saucers" had been popular in 1943–1945, these objects would have been so labeled. It was interesting that in at least two cases reviewed that the object sighted was categorized by Robertson and Alvarez as probably "Foo Fighters" to date unexplained but not dangerous; they were not happy thus to dismiss the sightings by calling them names. It was their feeling that these phenomena are not beyond the domain of present knowledge of physical science, however. [*Report of Scientific Advisory Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects Convened by Office of Scientific Intelligence, CIA,* January 14–18, 1953, commonly known as the "Robertson Panel"]

David Tressel Griggs, 1911–1974

So, who was Griggs? How did he get to be "most knowledgeable"? And, what did he know?

David Tressel Griggs was born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1911 and educated at Ohio State and Harvard in geophysics. When World War II began, he was one of the legions of bright young scientists drafted into the MIT Radiation Laboratory, primarily tasked to work on radar science and technology. His immediate contribution was to the application of radar to ground-based anti-aircraft fire. At the time, Edward Bowles, MIT expert in microwave radar, was chief scientific consultant for Secretary of War Henry Stimson. He needed a sharp, young radar expert to learn and advise on action right at the European front. Griggs was also an amateur pilot of some skill, so he was the man chosen.

Griggs reported to Bowles's office at the Pentagon in 1942 and shortly thereafter headed overseas. He worked under Army Air Force General Henry (Hap) Arnold's authority, and rotated through the commands of Generals Elwood (Pete) Quesada, Jimmy Doolittle, and Carl Spaatz. He was a hands-on guy, flying both training and combat missions, and got the respect of the military personnel with whom he worked. He spent most of the war in the European theater, and, after V-J day, was transferred to the Pacific theater to aid in the exploitation of Japanese scientific and technological assets.

Griggs, therefore, was in a perfect position to pick up anomalous air-encounter stories, which the flyboys thought would be of interest to a scientific expert who was also a pilot. But his information gathering was not just an accident of him being in the right place to hear stories about encounters with foo fighters.

Michael D. Swords is professor emeritus of the Environmental Institute, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.

WHAT GRIGGS KNEW

The source of the following (inside?) information is James McDonald, as is often the case. McDonald regularly hunted down every shred of evidence about anomalous aerial phenomena and government malfeasance, and was, in this instance, dissecting the Robertson Panel report. He did not know Griggs personally, but with typical forthrightness wrote him a letter in March 1969, telling of his interests in UFOs and including texts of several of his talks. Two weeks later Griggs hadn't responded, so McDonald gave him a call (McDonald was impatient, too).

Griggs was quite friendly and open. McDonald's notes from the conversation include these comments (with a few words added here and there for clarity):

> Every place he'd go, these things showed up. Gen. Arnold sent a TWX to ask that he check into it. He wrote reports on it, but has no copies, and is not sure where they'd be in Air Force files.
>
> We had all kinds of troubles [with these things] in Europe. But the phenomena were quite different in Japan—the accounts were different in Japan—they were all one type . . . "red fireballs."

This is, of course, an interesting claim, but not necessarily an accurate one. Remember, Griggs is recounting to McDonald only about the case reports that he gathered, and speaking from memory.

> The [cases of] white and yellow [foo fighters] he had no explanation for. Red ones he felt had some explanation, but he was not sure what.

We can snicker a little at that last statement from Griggs, but let's give him a break. I believe that what he was trying to communicate is that, knowing about the fire of jet exhausts, or meteor fireballs, or polluted skies shifting light towards the red-orange end of the spectrum, he can imagine ultimately coming up with ordinary causes for reports of red foo fighters. But, Griggs seems to believe that anything on the yellow-white end is completely mysterious.

Griggs went on to tell McDonald his musings about jet exhausts being misinterpreted, about dark nights with no background leading to tricks of perception, about war nerves, and all of that. He then related how he and a crew had gotten temporarily fooled by the Moon rising under just the wrong (or right) conditions. But Griggs didn't really believe that such things explained the lot of foo fighter reports.

> I asked if he felt all this was mass hysteria? He said: "No, of course not!" [McDonald underlines the "not"—I think the exclamation point would have been a better choice.]
>
> [In the sighting with the crew], he felt that the Moon false alarm came from the considerable pre-mission querying about fireballs that he'd carried out. They were over-eager to get him one. This crew had seen a lot of them. One had been shot at by one [of the crew?]!

Griggs ended this part of the story by saying that "he felt there was something real involved, but was not sure what it was."

In the cases Griggs collected in Europe:

> The air observers reports were all over *enemy* territory—never over *our* ground. Anxiety that the enemy might have something we needed to know about kept the checking under way. [And], there were reports of engine disturbances over ___ [word could be "Reich", as it begins with an R and is 4 or 5 letters in length].

The key point here is that Griggs knew of aircraft engine interference cases in connection with foo fighters—not just one, but multiple instances.

And here is an odd case, which Griggs told McDonald as an illustration of war nerves, or something similar (but I wonder):

> In Europe he ran into some cases where there seemed to be psychological stimulus [for the alleged observation]. For example, a case where there were three or four [military personnel? Or planes?] in a group, and only one would see it and not the others. Psychological factors are evident in that case.

I'm going to put on my risk-taker's hat for a moment and go out on a limb on this case. McDonald's notes sound to me like he's talking about three or four *planes* in a group, not guys standing around on the ground or in one plane. If so, the idea that the foo fighters might be seen from one plane but not others shouldn't put off the 21st-century UFO student, with all the high strangeness we've seen in UFO reports in the intervening years. I'm reminded of Colm Kelleher's mind-boggling case when working for NIDS (see pp. 25–31, this issue), where the gentleman horse rancher notices the horses staring over a slat-wood fence at something and goes over to check. He sees nothing. Then he climbs on the fence and there, at a downward angle, he sees a small disk. Puzzled as to why he didn't notice it on the walk over, he climbs back down and looks through the slats. He can't see it that way! Back up, yes. Back down, no. This is an extreme case of a "privileged viewing angle," but you probably know a handful of incidents where this high strangeness might apply. Could it be that the good Dr. Griggs encountered the same thing years ago, but then dispensed with it too quickly? Yes, but we can hardly blame him.

Notwithstanding the fact that Griggs spent far more time in the European theater than the Pacific, he thought the reports from the Pacific were more numerous. There was a lot of concern about that because Allied Intelligence knew that the Japanese were experimenting with "electromagnetic rays," and they wondered whether they had developed some sort of beamed weapon that could produce the red-orange fireballs. When Griggs was transferred there as part of the Compton Commission to examine Japanese military-technology research, he made a special effort to track down the electromagnetic beam experiments and anything else that might explain the foo fighter observations. Griggs "did as much checking as he could, but found nothing. He felt that the Japanese probably were not hiding anything. They found no records of *on-ground* observations by Japanese personnel or pilots, though he could have missed that, he conceded."

Concerning the "ray" technology, it did exist, but at a rudimentary level. "[Their devices] could stop engines at short range . . . one massive device could kill a rabbit at a ___ [word hard to read, possibly "meter"].

Griggs and McDonald go on to discuss the size of the device (a 10-meter dish), power ("Megawatt-CW"), and effective agency ("not thermal"). The device was shipped to the U.S. and studied here thoroughly (one wonders what resulted from that investigation).

Concerning the Japanese reports, "they had a lot of data on location. Certain regions were of high frequency in Japan. Southwest of Toyko [was one such]. There were three such regions [of high report density]."

In the end, though, through all of his exploration into cases and into Japanese R&D, "he could not find anything in Japanese records to match our Air Force's B-29 crew reports. He felt that he had really looked for it, but found zero." So Japanese technology doesn't seem to have produced the foo fighter reports.

There was one thing that Griggs said to McDonald that stretched me past my credulity line, and I'm not sure that *he* believed it, either. He claimed:

> We gave all this [foo fighter] information to a Japanese general headquarters man, since both he and our Air Force were very interested in it. There were cases of tail gunners who shot them down and saw them crash. These reports seemed sometimes to come from steady observers.

Based on this, Griggs said that he was therefore "not inclined to brush this aside completely." He believed that there should be lengthy accounts of "red fireball" foo fighter cases in Air Force records, and suggested the 21st Bomber Command as a likely repository. FOIA, anyone? The bottom line in Griggs's investigation was that *no conclusion was ever reached* as to the nature or source of the foo fighter phenomenon.

So, an aerial mystery—a large number of concentrated reports (a massive "flap," one might say), airplane pacing, chasing, and intelligent-seeming maneuvering perhaps, engine-interference cases—and no human technological explanations. I find it all quite fascinating.

FOO FIGHTER, INDEED

We end this review with another foo fighter report via a document obtained through FOIA. Albert Simpson, chief of the USAF Historical Division at the Air University, Maxwell AFB, was intrigued by news stories in early January 1953 of puzzling lights seen over Japan. This jogged his memory and he dug up the following "Mission Report" and sent it to Chief of Intelligence, General John Samford (of Washington press conference fame that previous summer when UFOs were seen over D.C.).

> Headquarters VII Bomber Command
> Mission Report No. 11-327
> Date: 2 May 1945 (GCT)
> OBSERVATIONS:
> The crews of plane #616 over FALA ISLAND, TRUK ATOLL, at 021802Z observed 2 airborne objects at their 11,000 foot altitude changing from a cherry red to an orange, and to a white light which would die out and then become cherry red again. These objects were out on either wing and not within range of caliber-50 machine guns. Both followed the B-24 thru all types of evasive action. A B-24 took a course for GUAM and one of the pursuers dropped off at 021900Z after accompanying the B-24 for an hour. The other continued to follow, never approaching closer than 1000 yards and speeding up when the B-24 went thru clouds to emerge on the other side ahead of the B-24. In daylight it was seen to be bright silver in color.

This report seems almost too good to be true. Jim McDonald and probably even David Griggs would have approved. ✦

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BIG SUR—*continued from page 11*

type of test described by Bob Jacobs all along. The Air Force had hoped that the warhead, within the RV, would be difficult to distinguish from the cloud of metallic chaff—aluminum foil strips—accompanying it through space. If this test was successful, the experimental system might defeat an enemy's radar, by effectively rendering invisible the incoming nuclear warhead.

According to Encyclopedia Astronautica, the September 22 launch—the one picked by George—was designated an "NTMP KX-19 Target" mission, which means Nike Target Missile Program, flight number KX-19. As I was to later learn, unlike the earlier test on September 15, which was designed to evaluate the experimental Reentry Vehicle itself, the purpose of the target test was to determine whether the U.S. Army group on Kwajalein Atoll would be able to track the RV on radar. It was hoped—if such tests were successful—that incoming Soviet warheads might be targeted with Nike antimissile missiles.

This distinction seemed clear enough; however, because Jacobs had written that the test disrupted by the UFO had been "in support of our Nike-Zeus objectives," I needed to be certain that the September 22 "Nike Target" mission refer-

IMAGE RESOLUTION OF THE OPTICAL SYSTEM AT BIG SUR

by Mark Rodeghier

Robert Hastings correctly notes this key question: "But would the remarkable, UFO-related events, assuming they occurred, actually be visible on the film, at least in the detail described by Jacobs and Mansmann?" This is one of the central points of contention raised by skeptics, including Kingston George himself (see Hastings's note 10).

Fortunately, the question can be answered because George supplies the mirror size of the telescope used at Big Sur, and because well-known optical principles govern image resolution. George reports, "The 24-inch mirror telescope we borrowed was built in the 1950s . . . by Boston University under government contract."

The size of a telescope's mirror determines its resolution, which can be defined as the ability to separate two point-like sources of light. Consider a double star system. If a telescope (or your eye) can see only one point of light, then the two stars are unresolved. If both stars can be seen separately, then the stars are resolved.

Resolution is a complex issue when sources other than distant lights are being viewed, but becomes simpler when a situation basically mirrors that in astronomy, where an object's real size is much, much less than its distance from the telescope.

The resolution of a telescope is well approximated by the Rayleigh formula, which is based on diffraction. The governing equation is:

$$\text{Resolution (in radians)} = 1.22\lambda / D$$

where λ is the wavelength and D is the size of the mirror.

Using a wavelength of 550 nanometers, typical of sunlight, and substituting 0.61 meters for D, yields a theoretical resolution of 0.23 arcseconds.

Next we must determine the effective size, in arcseconds, of the missile or UFO at the distance they were filmed. Based on Robert Salas's calculations, we can use an approximate distance of 600 nautical miles. (It turns out that altering this by a factor of 20% or so won't make an appreciable difference in the result.) I won't trouble with listing the formula for angular diameter/angular size, but simply present the result for an object 10 meters in size (the estimated diameter of the UFO).

At 600 nautical miles, an object 10 meters in size subtends about 1.86 arcseconds. This is much larger than the resolution limit of 0.23 arcseconds of the 24-inch telescope being used to capture images of the launch. What this means in plain English is that, under good conditions, the system used at Big Sur should have easily been able to see an object 10 meters in size as a separate object. The general shape of the object should also have been discernable.

This result also suggests that objects just a few meters apart could have been resolved as separate by the optical system. That this was the capability of the system seems consistent with George's own commentary. As he notes, "we not only could see and gather data on the missile anomalies as hoped, but we also were viewing details of the warhead separation and decoy deployment that were considered by the air force to be highly classified."

There are two caveats to this analysis. First, the Rayleigh resolution is theoretical and is not reached except under the most exceptional viewing conditions. Effective resolution at mountain sites like Big Sur typically varies from 0.50 to 1.0 arcsecond. Even then, an object 10 meters in diameter could be resolved by the telescope.

The second is the nature of the film system recording the output from the telescope. The system filmed the image off an Image Orthicon screen, and if the screen had lower resolution than the input from the telescope, some detail would be lost.

All the same, the system would still be able to see (resolve) an object circling the missile in flight, unless it was very close (less than a few dozen meters). Bright pulses of light from the object to the warhead should also have been visible.

This analysis, based on standard optical principles, and information supplied by Kingston George, thus generally supports the observations and testimony of Jacobs and Mansmann.

enced in EA was not the actual launch after all. At first glance, one might interpret the wording of Jacobs's "Nike-Zeus" statement as a reference to the launch discussed by Kingston George. Therefore, I challenged Jacobs on this point, asking him if he were absolutely certain that the later launch—the Nike target test—was not the launch in question.

Jacobs's response was emphatic, "No, we were testing the RV itself. It was not a target test." He then elaborated, "There were several interesting aspects of the anti-missile-missile tests. This particular one involved a dummy warhead and a bunch of radar-deflecting aluminum chaff. The dummy warhead was targeted to splashdown at Eniwetok Lagoon. . . . As far as I know Kwajalein [played no part in this test] aside from radar tracking. There was no planned Nike launch [involved with it]."[21]

Given this unequivocal statement, the question remains: Did George select and discuss the *same* missile test described by both Jacobs and Mansmann? The entries in Jacobs's original mission log, as well as the now-available data published by Encyclopedia Astronautica, appear to indicate that he did not, thus negating much of the force of George's critique.

ODD OMISSION

Significantly, in his *Skeptical Inquirer* article, Kingston George devotes not a single word to Florenz Mansmann's unreserved endorsement of Jacobs's published account of the Big Sur UFO incident. Perhaps George was unaware that, by the time he wrote his debunking article in *SI*, Mansmann had already admitted to several people that Jacobs's account was factual.

I wished to ask George about this odd oversight, and other issues, so I telephoned him in January 2003. At the outset, I candidly admitted that I fully accepted Jacobs's and Mansmann's virtually identical accounts regarding the UFO incident. I also said that I was seeking a few details and clarifications relating to his side of the story. Finally, I asked George if he had ever read, or at least heard about, Mansmann's published comments on the case.

George claimed to have no knowledge of Mansmann's endorsement of the reality of the UFO encounter. I then briefly summarized various supportive statements Mansmann had made over the years and asked George to explain the retired major's unwavering support for Jacobs, if in fact his account was merely a fabrication or flight of fancy. He responded, "I think [Mansmann] did that out of largesse."[22] In other words, according to George, Dr. Florenz Mansmann—a distinguished retired U.S. Air Force officer and Indiana University–educated biomedical researcher—casually risked his military and scientific reputation by knowingly and repeatedly endorsing Jacobs's "weird claims" out of the goodness of his heart.

Is the "largesse" scenario offered by George plausible? I think not.

Although a number of George's published statements about the Big Sur case are at best misleading, they still conceivably represent an attempt to present an honest difference of opinion with Bob Jacobs. Regardless, the fundamental point to be made is that George has apparently chosen the *wrong launch mission* upon which to base his extensive, debunking commentary. If this is indeed the case—and it seems very probable, based on Jacobs's private records as well as now-published technical data—then many of George's errors understandably follow from his original misstep. However, there is another relevant fact relating to the publication of his article which requires examination.

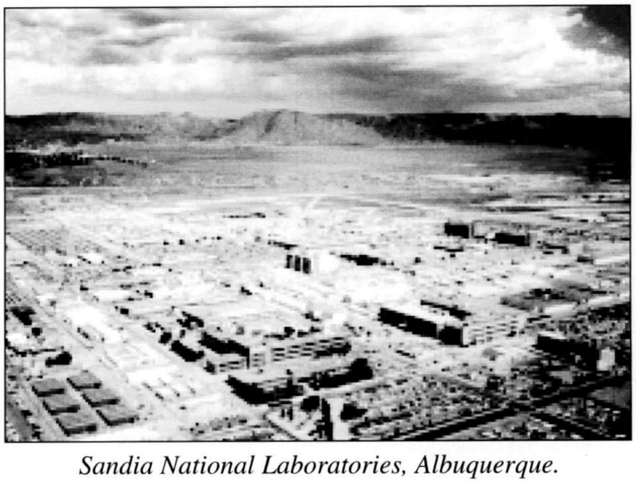
ANOTHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONNECTION

Factual errors aside, George's *Skeptical Inquirer* article goes well beyond the mere presentation of contrary views and straightforward debate. Quite clearly, the article was designed to disparage Jacobs's basic credibility and to deride his so-called "weird claims" regarding the notion of UFO-interference with the nuclear weapons–related test.

I consider it noteworthy that George's article was published in CSICOP's *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine. At first glance, this is hardly surprising, given CSICOP's tireless crusade to discredit UFOs. However, because the Big Sur incident reportedly involved a UFO disabling—*shooting down*—one of the U.S. military's experimental nuclear warhead systems, *Skeptical Inquirer*'s obvious endorsement of George's attempted debunking of the incident is particularly interesting.

Why? The executive editor of *Skeptical Inquirer* is Kendrick C. Frazier. Some years ago, I discovered that Frazier has been employed, since the early 1980s, as a public relations specialist by Sandia National Laboratories, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Sandia Labs has been instrumental to the success of America's nuclear weapons program since the late 1940s, through its "ordinance engineering" of components for bomb and missile warhead systems.

Frazier's affiliation with Sandia Labs is relevant, given the numerous references in declassified government docu-



Sandia National Laboratories, Albuquerque.

ments and in the statements of former military personnel—including Bob Jacobs—relating to UFO sightings at nuclear weapons development, testing, and deployment sites over the past six decades. As I noted in my introduction, these startling incidents have been reported at every major U.S. nukes lab, including Sandia, and at ICBM sites, including Atlas missile silos at Walker AFB in 1964, the very year the Big Sur incident occurred.

Considering these disclosures—which clearly establish a link between UFOs and nuclear weapons—I find it interesting, to say the least, that the longtime editor of the leading debunking magazine—whose pages routinely feature articles discrediting UFOs and those who report them—should be employed as a public relations spokesman by one of the leading nuclear weapons labs in the United States.

Perhaps significantly, *Skeptical Inquirer's* publisher's statement, which appears at the beginning of each issue, fails to mention Frazier's employment at the highly secretive, government-funded laboratory. Instead, the magazine merely lists his profession as "science writer"—a reference to his having written several books and articles on various scientific subjects. One major online biography on Frazier also fails to mention his Sandia Labs connection.[23]

On the other hand, I have found a few, mostly obscure references to his work at Sandia. Regardless, as I have discovered, most scientists, at least those attending my UFO lectures at colleges and universities, are unaware of Frazier's day job. This is equally true for ufologists.

Over the years, Frazier has been quick to dismiss the astonishing revelations about UFOs contained in government documents declassified via the Freedom of Information Act. He claims that researchers who have accessed thousands of U.S. Air Force, CIA, and FBI files have consistently misrepresented their contents. In one interview he stated, "The UFO believers don't give you a clear and true idea of what these government documents reveal. They exaggerate the idea that there is a big UFO cover-up."[24]

Just as Frazier strives to minimize the significance of the declassified revelations about UFOs, it is likely he will also attempt to downplay the relevance of his job with one of the U.S. government's top nuclear weapons labs, as it pertains to his magazine's relentless debunking of UFOs. He will presumably assert that his skeptical views on the subject are personal and sincere, and are in no way related to, or influenced by, his public relations position at Sandia National Laboratories.

However, regardless of his response, I believe that Frazier's employment at Sandia is very relevant, and raises questions about his impartiality, if nothing else, when he publishes stridently anti-UFO articles such as those featured in *Skeptical Inquirer*—including the one written by Kingston George.

For his part, CSICOP's chief UFO debunker, the late Philip J. Klass, aggressively hounded Jacobs after he published the warhead shoot-down story, going so far as to write a derisive letter to Jacobs's department chairman—Dr. R. Steven Craig, Department of Journalism and Broadcasting, University of Maine—in which Klass accusingly questioned professor Jacobs's fitness as a representative of the academic community.

Jacobs's understandably indignant response to Klass, entitled "Low Klass: A Rejoinder," may be found online.[25] It is a must-read for anyone wishing to understand the behind-the-scenes battle that ensued after Jacobs went public with the UFO incident.

Among other subjects, the rejoinder touches on acrimonious correspondence between Jacobs and Klass. At one point, Jacobs had apparently asked the debunker for character references. Klass responded by citing Admiral Bobby Ray Inman (USN Ret.), the former director of the National Security Agency who also held deputy director positions at both the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency; and Lt. General Daniel O. Graham (USA Ret.), the former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and former deputy director of the CIA. Klass not only provided Jacobs with their names, but home addresses as well, and told him, "Both men have worked with me and gotten to know me in my efforts for *Aviation Week.*"

The character references provided by Klass are certainly interesting. Jacobs took them as veiled threats and wrote, "Put yourself in my position now. I had published an article charging that the CIA, or some other secret agency of the government, had been instrumental in covering up the documenting of a UFO, that I had been ordered to be part of a coverup in connection with that incident, and had now written about it. Then, along comes some chipmunk demanding that I turn over material to him and referring me to Bobby Inman and Daniel Graham to soothe my anxiety! The last outfit in the world to which I would turn for verification of a source or the legitimacy of a UFO 'researcher' [Klass] would be the CIA!"

Jacobs then reports on his response to Klass's demands: "I contacted my attorney immediately, and he advised me to have nothing to do with Klass or any of his people, since they might be trying to set me up for some sort of violation. In a letter dated April 3, 1989, I told Mr. Klass politely to go away and leave me alone, as follows:

> On advice of counsel and with all due respect, I am declining your offer. I have nothing which belongs to you, I have nothing to which you are entitled by rights and I don't like feeling pressured.
>
> My article in the MUFON JOURNAL [sic] says all that I have to say about the incident at Big Sur. The pertinent part of the Kingston George report was quoted only to prove that there was a malfunction during the period of time during which the B.U. telescope was at Big Sur and that the B.U. telescope was certified to have recorded it. This proof was necessary to refute the earlier assertion by the Air Force that there was not even a launch, much less a malfunction recorded by the B.U.

telescope. I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised by this denial since the Air Force also denied earlier that there had ever been a Lieutenant Robert Jacobs![25]

CONCLUSIONS

The crucial source testimony relating to the Big Sur UFO Incident has been explicit, detailed, and steadfast. While Bob Jacobs readily concedes that certain of his recollections involve reconstructions and estimates, the basic narrative he presents has remained intact, nearly 25 years after it was first published, in the face of often withering criticism and indefensible insult.

Importantly, there exists a second, highly credible source. Florenz Mansmann has repeatedly and unequivocally endorsed Jacobs's account as being "all true as presented." Moreover, because Mansmann's photo-interpretation tasks at Vandenberg AFB involved his expert evaluation of the films of Vandenberg's missile tests, he was the perfect person to analyze the objects and events recorded during the launch in question. His own assessment of the UFO incident is direct and unapologetic: A domed-disc—an extraterrestrial spacecraft—maneuvered near one of our dummy nuclear warheads and shot it down with four beams of directed-energy.

In 1964, when the incident occurred, such a claim, even by a distinguished USAF officer, would have seemed deluded or, at best, a bizarre science fictional fantasy. Think Buck Rogers and death rays. However, by 2001, a respected military-affairs journal could report that the U.S. government had once undertaken—and might still be covertly pursuing—research relating to shooting down incoming nuclear warheads with directed-energy beams.

If the account provided by Jacobs and Mansmann is indeed factual, as I believe, it is understandable why the U.S. military would wish to keep the Big Sur UFO incident secret. At a minimum, we are discussing the existence of vastly superior, saucer-shaped craft, capable of pacing and disabling our nuclear warheads in space. A confirmation of the event would effectively be an official acknowledgement of our potential strategic vulnerability. For this reason, if no other, the Pentagon will never admit the reality of the incident. Furthermore, regardless of its actual purpose, many American citizens would view the shoot-down act as hostile, thereby greatly complicating any official announcement of its occurrence.

More important, official verification of the warhead shoot-down would represent an irreversible admission of extraterrestrial visitation, simply because the technology reportedly involved was vastly beyond human achievement in 1964, and undoubtedly remains so at present.

The fact that some of Jacobs's and Mansmann's harshest critics were or are themselves engaged in classified research or public relations tasks in support of the U.S. government's nuclear weapons program is arguably noteworthy in any meaningful examination of this case. Perhaps these persons have sincerely expressed their skeptical opinions, but there is also another possible explanation: Debate is one thing but disinformation is quite another. In my view, the boundary between the two has been blurred during the discussion of this particular UFO incident.

The UFO/Nukes Connection has been confirmed by both declassified U.S. government documents and credible military witness testimony, including that provided by former ICBM launch and targeting officers. As noted, over the years, a number of those officers have reported instances of missile malfunctions occurring just as UFOs were observed maneuvering near or hovering above launch-related facilities. I consider this testimony to be important and compelling, and pertinent to our review of the events at Vandenberg AFB, in September 1964.

Whatever UFOs are, whatever their origin, whatever the purpose of their presence may be, it appears that those who presumably pilot these craft are interested in our nuclear weapons—for whatever reason—and have occasionally interfered with their functionality. Regarding the Big Sur UFO incident in particular, the question is whether those who have seemingly shut down nuclear missiles poised in underground silos have also shot one out of the sky. In my view, the daring testimony of Bob Jacobs and Florenz Mansmann convincingly suggests this is indeed the case.

NOTES

1. See www.nicap.org/bigsur2.htm.

2. Edward J. Ruppelt, *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), p. 155.

3. www.nicap.org/babylon/missile_incidents.htm.

4. Florenz Mansmann to Lee Graham, personal communication, January 30, 1983.

5. Florenz Mansmann to Peter Bons, personal communication, March 8, 1983.

6. Robert Jacobs to Florenz Mansmann, personal communication, January 14, 1985.

7. Florenz Mansmann to Curt Collier, personal communication, November 15, 1995.

8. Florenz Mansmann to T. Scott Crain Jr., personal communication, May 6, 1987.

9. Steven M. Greer, *Disclosure: Military and Government Witnesses Reveal the Greatest Secrets in Modern History* (Crozet, Va.: Crossing Point, 2001), pp. 79–85.

10. Kingston A. George, "The Big Sur 'UFO': An *Identified* Flying Object," *Skeptical Inquirer* 17 (Winter 1993): 180–187. See members.aol.com/tprinty2/bigsur.html.

11. Nick Cook, "Boeing Considers Feasibility of Plasma-Based Weapons," *Jane's Defence Weekly,* March 28, 2001, www.janes.com/regional_news/americas/news/jdw/jdw010328_1_n.shtml. Reproduced with permission from Jane's Information Group–*Jane's Defence Weekly.*

12. Trigonometric analysis on file at CUFOS.

13. Chuck Walker, *Atlas: The Ultimate Weapon* (Burlington, Ont.: Collector's Guide/Apogee, 2005), p. 60.

14. T. Scott Crain Jr., "UFO Intercepts Rocket," *MUFON UFO Journal,* no. 225 (January 1987): 5–6.

15. Florenz Mansmann to Peter Bons, personal communication, March 8, 1983.

16. Florenz Mansmann to Curt Collier, personal communication, November 15, 1995.

17. Kingston A. George, "Operations Analysis Staff Study: Preliminary Report on Image Orthicon Photography from Big Sur." USAF document, October 13, 1964.

18. Robert Jacobs to Robert Hastings, audiotaped telephone conversation, August 14, 2006.

19. Robert M. Jacobs, "Low Klass: A Rejoinder," www.nicap.org/bigsurrej.htm.

20. www.astronautixcom/lvs/atlasd.htm.

21. Bob Jacobs to Robert Hastings, personal communication, August 28, 2006.

22. Kingston George to Robert Hastings, telephone conversation, January 2, 2003.

23. www.annonline.com/interviews/971009/biography.html.

24. "Aliens" episode, *Critical Eye,* Discovery Science channel, 2002.

25. Robert M. Jacobs, "Low Klass: A Rejoinder," www.nicap.org/bigsurrej.htm. ✦

SANTA CATALINA—*continued from page 16*

1. They are generally ovoid and huge in size.
2. They sometimes appear highly energized, with the "energy" seemingly resulting from internal activity or interaction of conglomerate smaller objects held within.
3. They are often accompanied by smaller objects which reportedly make forays inland.
4. Compared to other UFO reports, they are extremely long-lasting.
5. They seem to recur in this area every five or six years on what might be termed a "regular basis."
6. In some of the summer sightings of 1962 and 1968, the ovoid shapes were thickly covered with vaporous material, while in others the vapor was seemingly nonexistent.

Consider the value to UFO research if, by 2007 or 2008, when researchers might reasonably expect another "visitation" by these Channel intruders, scientific instrumentation could be set up in the Southland area so that these long-lived UFO phenomena can be detected, photographed (even in infrared for nighttime sightings), videotaped, and otherwise scientifically studied.

REFERENCES

1. See original paper as published in *CUFOS 1976 Proceedings* at author's website, www.anndruffel.com/articles/ufo/santacatalinachannelcloudcigars.htm.

2. For example, see Herbert S. Taylor, "Cloud Cigars: A Further Look," *IUR* 30, no. 3, pp. 10–13.

3. In Long Beach, the Pacific Ocean, at least in the view of Long Beach residents, lies to the south, because of the extreme curve in the coastline where this city is located.

4. The author was not aware at the time of the large U.S. military installations that were, and still are, on San Clemente Island.

5. Documentation of the August 1962 Long Beach, California, event is in the author's files. Full reports were also sent to MUFON and CUFOS.

6. Ann Druffel, "Skynet: Making Sense from Confusion," *Skylook*, December 1973, no. 73, p. 3.

7. In Paul Wilson's private files, copy in Druffel files with identifying information.

8. Griebel report in Druffel files, report also sent to MUFON and CUFOS.

9. Aimé Michel, *Flying Saucers and the Straight-Line Mystery* (New York: Criterion, 1958).

10. "The Continuing UFO," column by Robert B. Klinn and David Branch, in the *Santa Ana (Calif.) Register,* December 26, 1973. [This prominent newspaper is now named the *Orange County Register.*] Also "Object Changes," *Skylook,* February 1974, no. 75, p. 13, and in private files of Druffel and Klinn.

11. Ann Druffel and D. Scott Rogo, *The Tujunga Canyon Contacts* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980). Updated edition (New York: Signet, 1989).

12. Report form filled out by witness and sent to MUFON. Interview notes taken from Druffel's Skynet logbook.

13. Report form filled out by main witness and sent to MUFON, with identification of second witness. Notwicki's comments noted in Druffel's Skynet logbook.

14. Sighting form, with witness identifications and interview details, sent to MUFON.

15. This recurrence rate is possibly related to that which David Saunders found in a study some decades ago, that UFO "flaps" occur around the world, in a regular pattern, every 5½ years. ✦

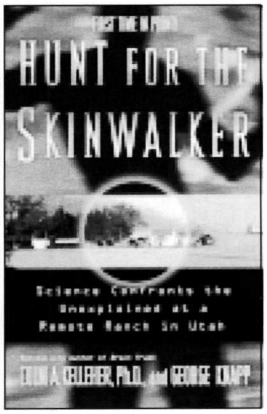
FRENCH UFO ARCHIVE

The French space agency plans to publish its archive of UFO sightings and other phenomena online but keep the names of those who reported them off the site to protect witness privacy. Jacques Arnould, an official at the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES), said the French database of about 1,600 incidents would go live in late January or mid-February on its website, www.cnes.fr/web/455-cnes-en.php. The archive consists of about 6,000 reports, many relating to the same incident, filed by the public and airline professionals. Advances in technology over the past three decades had prompted the decision to put the archive online, Arnould said.—Reuters, Dec. 29.

HUNT FOR THE SKINWALKER: NEW CHALLENGE FOR THE ETH?

BY GILDAS BOURDAIS

Hunt for the Skinwalker is an important and provocative book, but with a bizarre title. I will explain it later. The subtitle is more explicit: *Science Confronts the Unexplained at a Remote Ranch in Utah.* The authors are a biologist, Colm Kelleher, and a KLAS-TV (Las Vegas) journalist, George Knapp, well-known for his inquiries on UFOs. Kelleher holds a biochemistry doctorate from the University of Dublin.


HUNT FOR THE SKINWALKER
Science Confronts the Unexplained at a Remote Ranch in Utah
COLM A. KELLEHER, Ph.D. and GEORGE KNAPP

In short, Kelleher and Knapp reveal in detail the numerous strange phenomena that occurred on a ranch in Utah, ranging from weird lights and poltergeist happenings in the farmhouse, to frightening, ghostly apparitions and cattle mutilations. These events were studied very discreetly, almost secretly, during several years by a scientific team of the National Institute for Discovery Science (NIDS), under the direction of Kelleher. NIDS is a private organization that was set up in 1995 by Robert Bigelow, a wealthy businessman from Las Vegas, who happened to be interested in UFOs and related phenomena. Although NIDS is (or was, since it is now basically dormant) a purely private organization, Bigelow's contacts meant that great attention was paid to everything NIDS has said and published. And, although Kelleher and Knapp insist that they are independent authors (Kelleher no longer works with NIDS), their book stands somehow as the NIDS account of these strange events.

After a decade of active studies by NIDS on UFOs and related subjects, such as cattle mutilations and abductions, Robert Bigelow has apparently closed inquiries on UFOs and has turned to space projects and studies in conjunction with NASA, while keeping the NIDS website freely accessible, with some very interesting reports (see www.nidsci.org/index2.html).

In their book, Kelleher and Knapp tell how the NIDS team and its scientific board discussed the possible explanations of all these strange events, including "paranormal" theories, even the most esoteric ones. What links the story to UFOs is the fact that many observations were made of luminous orbs and silent flying objects of different shapes, including some typical UFO shapes. But they appeared and disappeared very strangely, an aspect that opens up the question of paranormal phenomena. Another link is that the area in which the ranch is located, the Uinta Basin in northeastern Utah, is, in their own words, "a heavyweight contender for UFO capital of the world. Since the 1950s, thousands of UFO sightings have been reported in the area, and it is estimated that half of the residents have seen anomalous objects in the sky."

Robert Bigelow

At the heart to the debate lies the question of the nature of UFOs. In this book, the classic extraterrestrial hypothesis is questioned by the authors, not only as an explanation for the events on the ranch but, by extension, for UFOs and related phenomena in general. They compare the events at the Utah ranch with similar events that occurred in other places, such as a ranch in Colorado, and in the area of Dulce, New Mexico. They also compare them with Indian legends, such as otherwordly entities called "tricksters" or "skinwalkers," which have the reputation of being malevolent. Chapter 5, entitled "The Curse," is devoted to these legends and it explains the strange title of the book.

Colm Kelleher

George Knapp

We learn that the ranch has a bad reputation among the Ute Indians of the area. A local researcher named Junior Hicks has told them that "they have stories about the place that go back fifteen generations. They say the ranch is 'in the path of the skinwalker'" (p. 16). The legend of the skinwalkers is present among several Indian tribes of the American southwest, such as the Navajo, Hopi, and Utes. For them, it is "a malevolent witch capable of being

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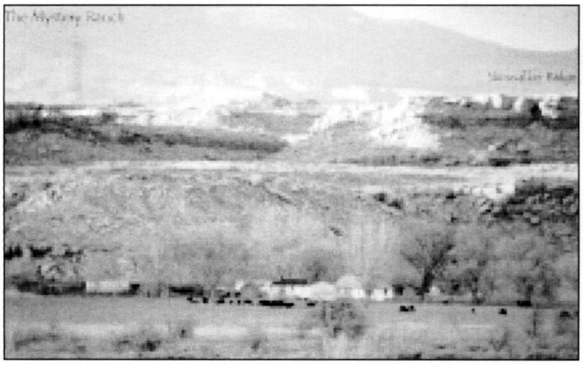
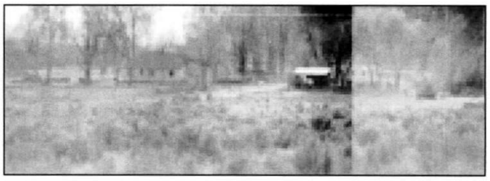
Gildas Bourdais is a longtime French UFO researcher who has written books on Roswell and UFO history, including OVNIs: La levée progressive du secret *(JMG, 2001).*



Utah UFO Hunters

The Gorman/NIDS ranch.



Another view of the Utah ranch.

transformed into a wolf, coyote, bear, bird, or any other animal" (p. 35). The skinwalker would thus not only be what we call now a "shape-shifter," but it would also be capable of mind control and other trickeries.

At the end of the book, the authors seem to be in favor of a rather esoteric point of view—referring notably to the ideas of Jacques Vallée (a member of the NIDS scientific board)—as an explanation valid for the whole domain of ufology. Without denying the paranormal aspects of their story, I don't agree with that global explanation, as I explain below. But let's start with the beginning of the story—the strange events that happened at that ranch in Utah.

STRANGE PHENOMENA

In late 1994, Tom and Ellen Gorman (not their real names) bought the ranch to raise cattle and moved onto it with their children. It had been vacant several years although it was good land for cattle. They were surprised to find heavy locks on all the doors and windows when they moved in.

Within a few months, they began to see balls of light of various colors—white, yellow, and blue—moving around the cattle and their home. They frequently observed baseball-sized orbs of a bright-blue color, "filled with swirling liquid, electrically charged" (p. 142), which dimmed the lights when they passed near the house. They also saw strange clouds "filled with exploding silent lights."

Here is one of the main aspects of the whole story. Several animals disappeared without a trace. Others were found dead, mutilated. In all, Tom Gorman lost 14 registered cattle out of a herd of 80 animals (p. 90), a severe financial loss. It would be one of the main subjects of study for NIDS.

One day, a frightening incident occurred. A huge "wolf," actually an animal much bigger than a wolf, quietly came close to them across the field. When it was very close, it suddenly attacked a calf. They shot it, but it was very hard to stop, even with a powerful gun. Although several bullets, enough to kill an elk, hit it, the animal just went away quietly and disappeared in the woods. They followed the tracks of the animal in the mud close to a river, but suddenly the tracks stopped abruptly. It looked unreal, but they were sure they had badly wounded a real animal that even lost a bit of flesh on the ground.

They experienced poltergeist activity in their home: Doors slammed, objects disappeared and were found later in another place, either in or outside the house. Some incidents seemed just like bad tricks. For instance, they found the salt in the pepper shaker and vice versa. Another time, Ellen Gorman found all the groceries she had carefully stacked in the cupboards back on the kitchen table (p. 239). Sometimes they heard voices laughing and mocking them in an unknown language.

UFO-like objects. Tom and Ellen Gorman "reported separate sightings of a silent, hovering, triangular craft that projected multicolored lights from its black frame" (p. 141). Gorman also saw a "silent miniature version of the F-117 aircraft," moving slowly at less than 20 feet above the ground. On another evening, his wife, when driving home, was "shadowed by a huge black triangular craft" that paced 30 feet above the car.

Such silent UFO-like craft have been observed in the area. One of their neighbors observed a UFO shaped like a Mexican hat. Another time Gorman saw a silvery disc that seemed to be "absorbed by the ridge" (p. 140). This is an interesting observation that suggests the passage of the UFO into "another dimension."

Several times, the Gormans observed ghostly creatures, like the legendary bigfoot or sasquatch, prowling their property. They heard ominous growls, were nauseated by musk odors, and at the same time saw silent flying objects "shaped like a refrigerator" hovering, causing panic among the cattle, and disappearing suddenly. These objects seemed to be similar to the *chupas* that attacked isolated people in northeastern Brazil.

One of the most impressive and disturbing events was when they found four big bulls, each weighing more than 2,000 pounds, locked asleep inside a trailer near a corral that had not been used in years. When they woke up, the bulls destroyed the interior and it was a difficult task to get them out of it.

Another time, Tom watched a herd of cows suddenly split as if something invisible was moving in their midst. The invisible thing produced a powerful magnetic field that was detectable with his compass.

The window. Chapter 8 of the book, called "The Window," recounts a series of outstanding observations that could be central to the whole story—the apparition of a sort of circular window floating in the sky. Here are the first lines of the chapter:

> Of all the extraordinary things that occurred at the Gorman ranch, the most common involved the strange, unworldly orange structures that would appear in the

> western sky. All family members saw these structures dozens of times. They would appear in the sky and seemed to hover low over the cottonwood trees about a mile away.

They saw it after nightfall, always roughly at the same place. One night inside the strange circle, Tom Gorman saw what looked to him like "another sky": "Through the magnifying scope, he distinctly saw a blue sky. On this particular night, the orange object looked like it was a window into somewhere else where it was still daylight" (p. 63).

One night Gorman saw a fast-moving black object, growing rapidly at the center of the orange window. It seemed to come out of the hole in the sky, and quickly vanished in the night. This convinced him that it was a kind of "dimensional doorway" through which objects could enter and exit our reality. This is a central idea of the whole story, to which I will return later.

Here is another incident that gives a definite impression of hostile manipulation by whomever sits behind it pulling all the strings. By June 1996, rumors were spreading of strange events on the ranch, and a visitor came to inquire about them. A tall, quiet man, he engaged in a sort of meditation in the middle of a field, his eyes closed and his arms raised. Suddenly, something began moving rapidly in the nearby wood. Tom Gorman, who was there, could not make out the shape but knew it was big. Then a blurred shape came out of the woods and moved swiftly toward the man, stopped just in front of him, and "let out a deep-throated animal roar," sounding half like a bear, half like a lion. The stranger was terrified and started screaming hysterically. He left the property in a state of panic and never came back.

In the summer of 1996, Gorman and his family reached the breaking point. One day, Tom let his three "favorite cattle dogs" pursue a "blue, baseball sized, flying orb." They followed it into a nearby wood. Gorman heard them yell, but soon heard them no more. Afraid, he waited until morning to look for the dogs, only to find them completely burned, incinerated.

At that point, the Gormans were so shocked and terrorized that they decided to sell the ranch. NIDS purchased the property in August 1996 and launched a scientific study there. The Gorman family moved 25 miles away, but Tom agreed to come daily to take care of the ranch and the cattle, and to help the NIDS team.

THE OBSERVATIONS BY NIDS

From the end of 1996 to the summer of 2004, a NIDS team led by Kelleher installed a permanent laboratory with a set of equipment. Their aim was to gather data in the electromagnetic and magnetic regions, and record any UFO lights in the visible and UV spectrum. They had a light-gathering device with Fresnel lenses, a spectrometer linked to a laptop computer, night-vision binoculars, video cameras with night-vision attachments, radio-frequency analyzers, and microwave detectors (p. 100). They succeeded in observing many incidents, but failed to make any decisive record of them, with the exception of some cattle mutilations.

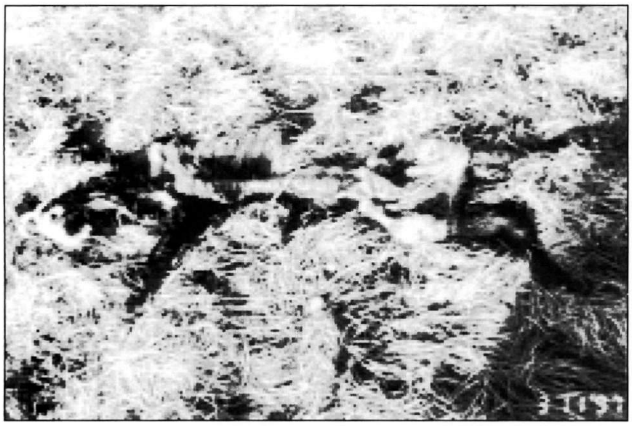
So, what did they find? Within a few months after the beginning of their study, they were confronted with strange and often frightening events. Like the Gorman family, they observed the same mysterious flying orbs, but failed to record them clearly. They installed their surveillance and recording equipment but, every time they were to the point of succeeding, the phenomenon eluded the trap. It became more and more like a game of cat and mouse. As the authors stated in their article in the online magazine *Sub Rosa* (subrosa.dailygrail.com/download.html, issue 4, March 2006), it looked like an elusive trickster was "a couple of steps ahead at all times," leaving an "occasional calling card in the form of a brutally ripped-up calf carcass, unusual tracks in the snow, tantalizing infrared images, or that could wantonly destroy surveillance equipment while leaving insufficient physical evidence behind that might constitute a smoking gun."

The tunnel. On August 25, 1997, two members of NIDS, Jim and Mike (not their real names) were on a night watch on the edge of a bluff 100 feet above the pasture where some strange events had taken place before. Around 2:30 a.m. they began to see a faint light just above the ground, invisible to the eyes but visible through powerful night-vision binoculars. It was a dirty-yellow light that expanded to form a kind of "tunnel" about four feet in diameter. Suddenly, Mike perceived a dark creature at least six feet tall crawl out of it and walk away, whereupon the tunnel began to shrink and disappear. However, his companion Jim claimed to have only seen the light. Although they had scientific equipment to measure radiation levels and magnetic spikes, they failed to record anything unusual. They took pictures but "the photos were disappointing, showing only a single very faint blurry light in one and nothing on the rest of the roll of film."

So, they were left with no solid proof of the experience. But it did offer a clue, together with the holes seen in the sky by the Gormans (not seen by the NIDS team), in favor of exciting speculation about so-called "other dimensions" that are discussed at length at the end of the book. One of the major observations of the NIDS team, however, brings us back to a disturbing aspect of the whole story—the cattle mutilations.

Cases of cattle mutilations. Since the end of the 1960s, thousands of mutilation cases have been reported in many areas of the United States, Canada, and other countries. In recent years, the phenomenon spread extensively in South America. The state of Utah, including the area of the Uinta Basin where the NIDS ranch is located, has been plagued with many cases. NIDS has investigated a number of cattle mutilations there, in addition to those at the ranch.

At the Gorman ranch, the main event on March 10, 1997, was the killing and mutilation of a young calf in broad daylight during a brief absence of the team, which had gone to the other side of a hill. The mutilation happened in less



Mutilated calf investigated by the NIDS team at the Gorman ranch, March 10, 1997.

than 45 minutes. It has been thoroughly studied, kept under wraps for a while, but was eventually published on the NIDS website and is now discussed in detail in the book.

Hunt for the Skinwalker offers no explanation for these mysterious killings and mutilations. However, on the NIDS website Kelleher published an important study on the possible link of cattle mutilations with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE, or mad cow disease) in North America. According to the study, there is a curious coincidence in the areas where the two phenomena occur. Kelleher speculates that the purpose of these mutilations might be surveillance of the illness. However, why aren't there more cattle mutilations in countries where mad cow disease has hit the most, such as England?

Odd sounds. The Gormans said that they often heard sounds of heavy machinery or metal equipment coming from under the earth, and the previous owners had warned them to avoid any digging (p. 224). In retrospect, it is curious that the book does not give more information about these mysterious previous owners. They seemed to know a lot about the ranch and might have helped the NIDS study. They certainly should have been interviewed.

Such bizarre sounds allegedly have been heard in other places, like the San Luis Valley and the "Four Corners" area. The San Luis Valley, located in southern Colorado, has been another prominent area for strange phenomena, including UFOs, odd balls of light, and cattle mutilations. This was where the first publicized mutilation, of the little horse Snippy (in fact, named Lady), occurred in 1967. Christopher O'Brien, who has written a book about these events (*The Mysterious Valley*, 1996), reported strange noises, loud humming and deep rumbling, heard close to the ground in the area of the Great Sand Dunes (p. 185).

Credibility of the story, and the question of secrecy. The fact that the NIDS team observed many strange incidents like those reported by the Gorman family lends a high credibility to the whole story. There is also testimony from neighbors of the ranch. On the other hand, it would have been also interesting to find the previous owners of the ranch and learn their own story. Some neighbors who knew them felt that they had somehow learned to accept these phenomena and live with them.

We may regret, however, that the book does not give any precise, scientific data collected on the ranch, such as magnetic recordings, or even pictures of the light balls and the orbs. For instance, there are many pictures, stills and videos, of light balls in connection with crop circles. So, why not at the NIDS ranch, with all their sophisticated equipment? Perhaps because, according to Tom Gorman, as soon as the NIDS team arrived at the ranch, the phenomena became much more elusive, as if the intelligence behind them had become much more cautious. However, Kelleher admits that they do have recorded material, so the question arises: Why don't they publish them? That would be the appropriate scientific approach. During all these years, the NIDS investigation at the ranch remained quite confidential, fueling accusations of secrecy and possible connections with the government.

THEORIES AND SPECULATION

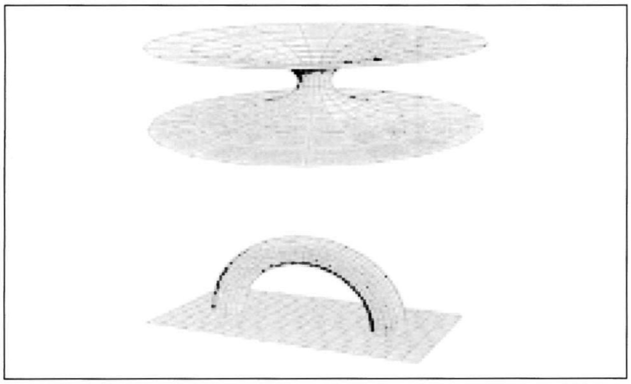
In their book, Kelleher and Knapp address ideas and speculations that might explain, according to them, the strange events at the NIDS ranch.

First, a substantial and intriguing part of their book is devoted to the question of parallel universes and other dimensions. The authors refer to several scientific theories that have been developed over many years about the existence of one or several so-called parallel universes. Let's recall briefly the main ones and see how they are viewed in the book.

Wormholes, based on the General Theory of Relativity. The best-known theory is the one of traversable wormholes, developed in 1985 by the American physicist Kip Thorne of the California Institute of Technology at the request of his friend Carl Sagan, who used it in his famous novel *Contact.* Based on Einstein's General Theory of Relativity, it is real scientific speculation by a reputable physicist. In short, there might exist a way to go from one part of the universe to another, or from one universe to another parallel one, through a hole (called a wormhole) in the fabric of space-time by passing through four-dimensional hyperspace, as envisioned by physicist Michio Kaku in *Hyperspace: A Scientific Odyssey through Parallel Universes, Time Warps, and the Tenth Dimension* (Oxford University, 1994).

It is a fascinating concept, but everyone admits that at best we are far from being able to engineer a wormhole. To begin with, it would require a colossal amount of exotic or negative energy just to keep it open; no one knows how that could be done, although it has become a standard method of space travel in science-fiction movies. It would also require the universe to be curved (the curvature of space in Einstein's theory), even though astronomical observations suggest that it is actually flat.

It's worth noting, however, that physicist Eric W.



The top figure is a representation of a traversable inter-universe wormhole. The top flared-out mouth is in our universe while the bottom mouth is in another universe. The wormhole throat-tunnel connects the two universes. The bottom figure is a wormhole with the throat-tunnel connecting two remote regions within the same universe.

Davis, who worked for NIDS, delivered a paper at the 2001 MUFON International UFO Symposium titled "Wormhole-Stargates: Tunneling through the Cosmic Neighborhood" (www.nidsci.org/pdf/davis_mufon2001.pdf). Davis boldly describes what such a wormhole could be and seems confident that we may create one someday by tapping into a fantastic source of power, the so-called zero-point energy. He notes that "of the more than 650 cases investigated by NIDS, several dozen clearly portend wormhole manifestations," and he includes in the list, unsurprisingly, the phenomena observed at the Utah ranch.

Polarizable-vacuum theory. Davis also mentions an alternative theory of gravity proposed by American physicist Harold Puthoff, called the "polarizable-vacuum (PV) representation of general relativity, which treats the vacuum as a polarizable medium." According to Davis, Puthoff's PV model is "the only alternative theory of gravity which has been successfully applied to explain the physical, anti-physical and physiological characteristics and performances" that have been reported in UFO cases. These theories are also mentioned in the Skinwalker book, but Kelleher and Knapp seem to favor another concept, the so-called "many worlds theory" or "multiverse," which derives from the second pillar of physics, quantum mechanics.

The many-worlds interpretation of quantum physics. The authors present this theory in chapter 29 ("Other Worlds") and they insist on it in their epilogue. It is probably the strangest theory, and the hardest one to swallow, ever conceived in the history of modern physics. First proposed by Hugh Everett and John Wheeler in 1957, it postulates, as physicist Max Tegmark writes in *Scientific American* (May 2003), that "random quantum processes cause the universe to branch into multiple copies, one for each possible outcome." The result is the existence of an infinite number of parallel universes, some of which differ from ours by minute details, just as in such science-fiction stories as the TV series *Sliders* and *Stargate*. One of the many questions raised by this fantastic theory is whether it is possible to go from one parallel universe to another—presumably through wormholes.

In their Epilogue, Kelleher and Knapp claim that this theory, which was at first highly controversial, is now accepted by a majority of physicists: "This concept is known as the multiverse or many worlds theory, and it has gained widespread acceptance in scientific circles" (p. 276). But a number of scientists are not convinced, notably promoters of superstring theory, which attempts to reunite the two pillars of physics. One of them is physicist Brian Greene, the author of two brillant books on these theories, *The Elegant Universe* (1999) and *The Fabric of the Cosmos* (2004). He suspects there may be other more economical solutions to this paradox of quantum physics. To Greene, there is no theory favored by a majority of scientists today and the problem remains unsolved. Not only that, he can find a place for parallel worlds in the string theories.

String theories, M-theory, and the model of parallel brane worlds. Superstring theory is actually a family of several theories with a long history since the 1960s. The most recent stage of its evolution, formulated by Edward Witten at the Institute for Advanced Study, is called M-theory. It postulates that the universe is made of 11 dimensions, but we live in a three-dimensional space called a brane (short for "membrane"). However, there may be another brane, or parallel world, that would never touch us but could be close. It would manifest only through gravitational effects. It might explain missing dark matter, or even hypothetical dark energy, both of which are two of the big mysteries of today's astronomy. According to some, it might be possible to travel from one brane to another, passing through an enveloping 10-dimensional hyperspace called the "bulk." Note that, in this theory, the two parallel branes are flat.

As for the nagging question of interdimensional UFOs and related phenomena, the bottom line seems to be that we don't really know yet how they come and go. Another nagging question is, who are the authors of these strange phenomena, and what is their agenda? As I said, Kelleher and Knapp present some ideas that tend to put aside the extraterrestrial hypothesis.

The second major area for speculation is the nature of the beings or entities that are behind these strange phenomena. Kelleher and Knapp think, like many other authors, that the classic ET hypothesis is inadequate, and they favor paranormal theories about so-called otherwordly beings and entities from other dimensions. So, we are back to the old question: ET or not ET? Let's look at their arguments.

The ETH questioned. In chapter 25 ("Hypotheses"), the authors start with this question: "Were UFOs flying over the Utah ranch or was the ranch haunted?" They then review relevant evidence and ideas. They quickly discard hoaxes, delusions, and unexplained natural phenomena such as the tectonic strain theory of Michael Persinger. They mention the idea of an ancient, very advanced, terrestrial civilization (human, presumably), but they don't insist on it, and I won't either. Then comes the big question of extraterrestrials, which they present as "the best known, but not necessarily the most credible, model for multiple anomalous phenomena" (p. 215). It seems difficult for them to imagine a plausible agenda for a group of extraterrestrial visitors who choose a remote and out-of-the-way location for their antics and activities. The authors have in mind the standard model of the ET hypothesis—aliens flying nuts-and-bolts spacecraft—and conclude that "the events at the ranch yielded insufficent data to support or eliminate this hypothesis," although some of the events "very much fit the standard description of UFOs." Kelleher admits that he has seen one himself with a colleague: "a silent, extremely fast moving object coming from the north and rapidly executing a perfect loop over the command and control center before returning north" (p. 216).

They consider the idea of smart probes sent from interstellar distances, but they discard it on the basis of a test proposed in the 1990s by British aerospace engineer T. Roy Dutton, who claimed to be able to specify the exact spot and date of the appearance of such anomalous aerial phenomena. Guess what? The Utah ranch failed his test. Another argument of the authors against the ETH is that, to this day, nobody has found any artifacts—physical or biological—of proven extraterrestrial origin. They also discard rapidly the hypothesis of ancient astronauts, which is, for them, "not supported by any physical data."

Arguments in favor of the ETH. Well, I am sorry to say that I find this argumentation very weak. In my opinion, it fails to seriously consider the vast amount of information gathered over the last 60 years on UFOs, which has built a strong and convincing case for the presence of, not one, but more probably several alien civilizations, some of them present, arguably, for a long time on our planet. In France, a group of senior scientists and military experts said that very clearly in the COMETA Report of July 1999.

There are strong suggestions in this evidence of the reality of physical craft of alien origin, made by nonhuman, scientifically advanced, civilizations. Whether they come from a planet in this universe or from a parallel world does not alter the nature of real, physical, alien beings who have come to Earth, for some purpose. However, at this point, Kelleher and Knapp go on to open the door to various paranormal theories, excluding ETs.

Paranormal theories favored by the authors. The idea that the strange phenomena at the Utah ranch are paranormal runs continuously throughout the book. The authors refer to many aspects, beginning with Indian legends such as the mysterious skinwalker. For the Ute Indians, the ranch is clearly a haunted place, filled with dark, evil energies. For them, it is "in the path of the Skinwalker," a malevolent force to be avoided. These are quasireligious, supernatural beliefs, and similar interpretations are found among religious fundamentalist believers, for whom such manifestations must be the work of demons.

But the authors don't stop there, and they turn to more sophisticated paranormal theories. In chapter 28 ("Other Dimensions"), they discuss the ideas of several authors, including:

- Jacques Vallée and his hypothesis of a mysterious *control system* pulling the strings for a long time, with an obscure agenda;
- John Keel and his no less mysterious theory of *ultraterrestrials,* whatever that means;
- Patrick Harpur and his intriguing concept of *daimonic reality,* derived from the belief in daimons (supernatural beings) of the ancient Greeks;
- Michael Grosso and his concept of the *imaginal realm.*

All of these ideas are variations on the concept of interdimensional beings, creatures that are not necessarily physical and that have inscrutable agendas (p. 238). Esoteric traditions have a long history of thinking along such lines. Such speculation has been present since the beginning of ufology, with authors such as Meade Layne of San Francisco, who believed in etheric realms and saw UFOs as ether ships.

In chapter 30 ("Inner Worlds"), the authors explore possible connections of these phenomena with human consciousness, citing again Harpur, Grosso, and Kenneth Ring and his study of near death experiences. They also turn toward meditation and shamanism and mention advice from the NIDS science advisory board about the possible existence of a "sentient, precognitive, non-human intelligence." And they introduce the ideas of the late John Mack on other realms or dimensions, alternate realities, doorways to spiritual evolution, and the innerworld nature of the experiencers.

Toward the end of the book, they refer again to Vallée and his hypothesis of a technologically advanced control system that may reside on this planet, be responsible for the display of UFOs, and seems to operate for reasons that are opaque and mysterious. It may have "an agenda to educate human societies over an extended period of time" (p. 255). The appearances of the Virgin Mary at Fatima and Lourdes might be control system displays. Kelleher and Knapp raise this question: "Were the events at the Utah ranch another one of its productions?" And they admit at the end their confusion: "It's as if some cosmic puppet master had written a laundry list of every spooky phenomenon of modern times and then unleashed them all in a single location, resulting in a supernatural smorgasbord that no one could possibly believe, even less understand" (p 270).

These are interesting musings that remind us of the writings of Jacques Vallée, who has obviously influenced them. However, even though I might subscribe to some of these ideas, I remain perplexed by the line of thinking that seems bent on the rejection of the ETH. My basic question remains: Why not aliens, extraterrestrial beings? If such beings can master travel through other dimensions, does that mean that they are no longer physical or extraterrestrial? And why could not both kinds of entities and phenomena, the real-physical and the supernatural, all coexist? Jerome Clark suggests that, more or less, in his article in *IUR* 30:4 ("The Core Phenomenon and the Secondary Phenomenon"). In his view, we should avoid mixing these two types of anomalies. On the other hand, I would add that many UFO events include elements of high strangeness, of which the case of the Utah ranch gives us a prime example. So, the distinction between real-physical and supernatural phenomena is not an easy one. My personal feeling is that they all pertain to one and same world.

To conclude my critique of the book, I propose a glimpse at the events that happened on another ranch, this one in nearby Colorado in 1975. APRO and several scientists studied these, and they may point to another perspective. The story is told at length in Timothy Good's *Alien Contact* (1993) in the "Colorado Breakthrough" chapter. Kelleher and Knapp also tell that curious story in their book.

The owners of that ranch went through many frightening experiences akin to those at the Utah ranch, such as bigfoot creatures, strange noises, disc-shaped objects flying slowly in front of the house, and cattle mutilations. The local police did not want to hear any more about these phenomena. A policeman told them that they knew what it was: the work of extraterrestrials, and that they could do nothing about it. One evening, a voice was heard in their home coming through the TV speakers, saying, "Attention! We have allowed you to remain," and recommending they keep quiet about the events.

Another evening, having noticed lights in the woods, they went to investigate. They found two beings of human appearance waiting for them in the light. These beings spoke to the main witness by his name and told him, "How nice of you to come." Nearby, there was a disc on the ground. They apologized for the inconvenience they had caused and promised some "more equitable arrangement," which actually never came. They did not really give any information on themselves or their role, except maybe this one, as the main witness said: "The only thing I found out for sure is that this big fuzzy thing, 'Bigfoot,' obeys the commands." So bigfoot would just be another kind of alien creature.

According to Good, the ranch owner believed there was some kind of permanent alien installation located on the ranch. The ranch offered a perfect view of a nearby military base, allowing the aliens to monitor military activities (p. 70).

I find this story very interesting when you consider the big UFO file of surveillance of military installations, especially nuclear bases. As for the Utah ranch studied by NIDS, let's recall that the Gormans several times heard strange noises of big machinery which seemed to come from underground. Was it just another trick of the skinwalker kind, or was there more to it? What was really going on, at and under the NIDS ranch? To conclude, I would like to say that *Hunt for the Skinwalker* is an interesting book, but one that leaves the reader perplexed with many unanswered questions. ✦

Ufopop.org is a website created by Jim Klotz and Les Treece-Sinclair that offers galleries of UFO images in comic books, magazines (including many *IUR*s), book covers, merchandising, and (soon) toys and games. It is intended to be both educational and entertaining. For those who have a serious interest in UFOs and flying saucers, popular culture, spacecraft art, or those who just want to stroll down memory lane, ufopop.org is the "utterly essential" site to visit, according to the UK's *Fortean Times.*

FLYING SAUCER REVIEW

LETTER

WILLIAMSON AND ADAMSKI

To the editor:

I am most appreciative of the article "Strange Days" by Michael D. Swords in *IUR* 30:4, pp. 20–25.

In beginning of the 1950s, I was but an ignorant farm kid, barely 12 years of age, living in rural New York State. In the era of George Hunt Williamson and George Adamski, none of those events had the opportunity to enter my mind. Reading the article added to and filled gaps in my knowledge. Now it is possible for me to connect the information to current-day knowledge and to develop a perspective that helps me to understand, to some degree, why persons and personalities of the past are treated the way they are today. Truly, what I didn't know about the past made a great deal of difference, and knowing it now is very helpful.

Thank you, CUFOS, for publishing "Strange Days." Thank you, Michael D. Swords, for writing about this little-known and little-understood history, doubts and disclaimers included.

Gary C. Matteson
Norfolk, Nebraska

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MEDIA TAKE NOTICE WHEN MEDIA TAKE NOTICE: UFO SEEN OVER O'HARE AIRPORT

by Mark Rodeghier

What does it take for a UFO report to get noticed and reported on by the establishment media? We know that publishing intriguing reports in UFO periodicals and websites isn't sufficient these days. There are many sources for such reports, but the media generally ignore them and the witnesses who make the reports. But the media trust each other, not surprisingly, even when reporting on fringe topics.

Thus, when the *Chicago Tribune* on January 1 of this year published a front-page story entitled "What WAS that thing in the sky at O'Hare?" fellow members of the mainstream media were happy to clamber aboard and carry the report, and even sometimes treat it seriously, although they still missed the bigger picture about security.

This incident does stand out as a cut above the ordinary. On November 7, 2006, a UFO was seen directly over O'Hare Airport in Chicago by several personnel of United Airlines, along with an undetermined number of passengers. An initial report was made to the National UFO Reporting Center by someone from United, and an investigation was begun by the National Aviation Reporting Center on Anomalous Phenomena, led by Dr. Richard Haines.

The object sighted was small and round or disc-shaped, estimated to be between 6 to 24 feet in diameter. It was seen directly over Terminal C just before dusk at about 4:30 p.m. The first report came from an employee engaged in pushing back United Flight 446 from its gate.

After hovering in place for a few minutes beneath low cloud cover, the object rose vertically and rapidly into the cloud deck, which was at about 1,900 feet. The UFO appeared to leave a hole in the clouds where it entered, as has been reported in a few other UFO sightings.

The United ground crew member told the pilots of Flight 446 about the sighting, and those pilots are said to have observed the UFO. The sighting was called into a United supervisor, who called air traffic control at the airport. The controllers supposedly didn't see anything on radar or visually, although it isn't certain that they actually searched for the UFO.

The *Chicago Tribune* assigned a reporter to the story after being tipped off by Davenport. Both United and the FAA initially denied that anything unusual had been reported, but the FAA backtracked when faced with a FOIA request from the reporter, and United admitted that there had been ongoing discussions about the UFO after the story appeared.

Why are government agencies seemingly uninterested in a strange object hovering, in daylight, directly over O'Hare airport, and seen and reported by official personnel. How is this possible, given the higher state of security after 9/11? What does this really say about the ability of the U.S. government to respond to threats in real time? We know they dismiss UFO reports out of hand; what does it take to get their attention?

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